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CHARTER REFORM IN CHICAGO, 1890-1915:

COMMUNITY AND GOVERNMENT IN THE

PROGRESSIVE ERA

by

Maureen Anne Flanagan

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School

of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial Fulfillment

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VITA

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 1902 a group of Chicago residents began a campaign for a new municipal charter which would both free the city from the domination of the state legislature and substantially alter the existing structure of the municipal government. For the next five years the new charter movement occupied a prominent place in municipal affairs. The people of the city debated the purposes and content of that charter, clashed on many occasions with the state legislature over the issue, and organized into groups favoring or opposing the charter until the voters finally rejected the proposed charter in a special referendum in 1907. Although subsequent charter reform campaigns were undertaken in 1908 and 1914, neither were as ambitious as the initial effort, and they too failed. As a result, Chicago has been governed for most of the twentieth century under a system designed in the previous century and under the careful control of the state legislature.

The Chicago charter reform movement was just one of many similar movements in large American cities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹ Until that time the control of state govern-

¹Edward Banfield and James Q. Wilson, City Politics (New York: Vintage Books, 1966); Charles Beard, American City Government: A Survey of Newer Tendencies (New York: Century, 1912); Ernest Griffith, A History of American City Government: The Conspicuous Failure, 1870-1900 (New York: Praeger, 1974) and A History of American City Government: The Progressive Years and Their Aftermath, 1900-1920 (New York: Praeger, 1974); Martin J. Schiesl, The Politics of Efficiency: Municipal Administration and Reform in America, 1880-1920 (Berkeley: University of California, 1977) provide the best overview of this subject.

ments over the internal affairs of cities had rarely been challenged: no court had considered the question of an inherent right to local self-government until 1871 and five years later the Supreme Court had ruled that "a municipal corporation, in the exercise of all of its duties, including those most strictly local or internal, is but a department of the State."² By the last quarter of the nineteenth century however this situation had become intolerable for both sides. Urban constituents deluged the state legislature for more and more special legislation to meet new needs brought on by rapid growth. On the other hand state lawmakers often used special legislation to keep political control of cities. They enacted laws whether or not desired by the city's residents--often over the city's objections--arbitrarily changed voting dates and terms of municipal offices, and gerrymandered wards.

To relieve this problem some states tried to limit the use of special legislation. In Illinois, for example, the new constitution of 1870 subjected all incorporated areas in the state to the provisions of a single incorporation act and forbade the General Assembly to enact special legislation for any one city. Chicagoans soon felt the restrictions of a law designed to apply to cities of 1000 as well as 500,000. By the 1880s the municipal sewerage system was hopelessly inadequate; the city however could not finance a new expanded system

²Barnes v. District of Columbia, 91 U.S. 540 (1876). See also Howard L. McBain, "The Doctrine of an Inherent Right to Self-Government," Columbia Law Review 16 (1916), p. 190-216 and 299-322; John F. Dillon, Commentaries on the Law of Municipal Corporations, 5th ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1911); Amasa Eaton, "The Right to Local Self-Government," Harvard Law Review 13-14 (1900-1901).

because it had reached the level of municipal indebtedness allowed by law. Its only recourse was to ask the legislature to create a separate governing body for handling this problem. Although ninety percent of the territory and population serviced by the resulting Sanitary District was within Chicago the city had no control over its activities.

Other states attempted to control the proliferation of special legislation by classifying cities according to size of population and allowing special legislation for all cities within a class. This method too could be detrimental to cities. In a flagrant violation of the spirit of this law, the Ohio state legislature created eleven classes, each applying to just one city, and thereby continued to interfere at will in the affairs of individual cities.

Neither method satisfied city residents who accused states of ignoring their needs and best interests and demanded municipal home rule. It was only logical, they argued, that local bodies could legislate more efficiently on matters which they understood better than anyone else. And since large cities had outgrown their governing structures and were urgently in need of reforms home rule would give them the power to solve current problems and meet new ones as they arose. Efficiency and utility were not the only motives urban dwellers had for advocating municipal home rule; they also strongly believed that the antipathetic needs and lifestyles of expanding urban areas and their largely rural, small-town states made home rule imperative.

To secure both local self-government and change their existing municipal structures cities throughout the United States turned to charter reform. St. Louis led the movement for home rule. In 1875 that city's representatives to a state constitutional convention per-

suaded their fellow delegates to include a clause permitting cities over 100,000 (at the time only St. Louis) to frame, adopt, and amend their own home rule charters without any intrusion by the state legislature. Other states followed the example of Missouri and granted varying degrees of home rule to their cities or at least allowed them to draft new municipal charters.

In their new or amended charters cities generally replaced the old decentralized ward-based City Council governments with a commission, a city manager, or a strong mayor. Regardless of the specific type of government adopted most of the new charters had the common objective of transferring power from the legislative to the executive branch.³ They stripped the Council of much of its powers to appoint and remove officials, draw up the municipal budget, and grant franchises. In addition, they often reduced the number of Council members and provided for at-large elections thereby eliminating the alderman's local base of power. The executive's power was enhanced through increased veto power, longer terms of office, and the replacement of old multi-member governing boards with single department heads appointed by and accountable only to the mayor--or headed directly by a commissioner in the case of a commission-type government.

The governments of many American cities today are the products of the charter reforms begun in the Progressive Era. Chicago, however, never experienced such reforms and this failure affected the city's subsequent political development in three important ways. First political power was never centralized as in many other cities--New York, Boston,

³Schiesl, p. 92-93 and 104-105.

Houston, Detroit, Portland, among others; instead the city maintained the ward-oriented strong City Council government. This decentralized system facilitated the future development of a strong party system with patronage opportunities throughout the city, because no one city official was inherently more powerful than any other, and control of the political machinery could be gained best by building a loyal coalition of office-holders and voters. Chicago's mayors from Cermak through Daley were strong not because of the inherent power of their office but because of a strong and loyal party system.

A second consequence of Chicago's lack of reform is that the machinery of government itself remained divided among several separate authorities. The municipal corporation, the County government, Sanitary District, Board of Education, Park District each prepares its own budget, levies its own taxes, and provides municipal services within Chicago's boundaries; the city controls only the municipal corporation. While this division of authority enabled Chicago to avoid for years the crushing fiscal problems suffered by other large cities such as New York, this arrangement has also allowed Chicago to evade responsibility for providing essential public services. For instance, though the city does not have to finance costly public welfare and public health programs, leaving these responsibilities in the hands of Cook County and the state has meant many services readily available in other urban areas have been difficult to obtain in Chicago. The result is that in an area of several million there is only one general public hospital and that institution has for years suffered from administration by officials from outside the city who are often more concerned with fiscal austerity than with the availability of medical care to those in need.

The recurring fiscal crises of the public school system over the last decade also illustrate quite clearly the problems this division of authority has caused. The mayor appoints the school board with city council approval but does not choose the Superintendent of Schools over whom the city has no authority. Furthermore the mayor has no power to remove his or her appointees to the school board. Because the Board of Education is not a department of the city, the city cannot transfer municipal funds to the schools in the event of a crisis, nor can it demand accountability from the Board either for past or current policies, nor can it prevent the state from interfering in the affairs of the school system. One result is that currently a state imposed financial authority responsible only to the legislature oversees the Board of Education, leaving the people of Chicago without control over their children's schools and with no elected city official they can hold accountable.

A third consequence of the failure of charter reform is that until the new state constitution of 1970 Chicago exercised no municipal home rule. It remained firmly dominated by a state legislature consistently hostile to its needs. As an industrial city with a population of over two million by 1910, much of it immigrant or the children of immigrants, Chicago contrasted sharply with most of rural and small-town "downstate." By the late nineteenth century downstate legislators were already trying to restrict permanently the number of Chicago representatives and several times in the ensuing decades simply refused to reapportion electoral districts according to population thus depriving Chicago of its rightful representation in the General Assembly. At its

best, the history of Chicago-downstate relations has been one of political trade-offs; at its worst it has degenerated into political warfare with Chicago far too often being denied desperately needed legislation.

While its affect on Chicago's political development in the twentieth century is one important reason for examining the charter reform movement, the movement also deserves attention for what it tells us about the city and its people during this crucial reform period of the early part of the century. Historians of Chicago, and in general those studying cities in the Progressive Era, have emphasized reformers and their ideas and motives. Regardless of how the reformers are described--as upper-class businessmen and professionals, an old or new middle-class, political bosses and machines, or working class ethnics--or what interpretations are advanced for their motives, these works have one thing in common: the people studied are the civic and political leaders of the community.⁴ What did the majority of a city's residents want from their city and municipal government? Did they agree or disagree with

⁴As representatives of the general literature see John Buenker, Urban Liberalism and Progressive Reform (New York: Norton, 1973); Samuel Hays, "The Politics of Reform in Municipal Government in the Progressive Era," Pacific Northwest Quarterly 55 (1964); Melvin G. Holli, Reform in Detroit: Hazen S. Pingree and Urban Politics (New York: Oxford, 1969); Otis A. Pease, "Urban Reformers in the Progressive Era," Pacific Northwest Quarterly (April 1971); Bradley Rice, "The Galveston Plan of City Government by Commission: The Birth of a Progressive Idea," Southwestern History Quarterly 73 (1975); Schiesl, The Politics of Efficiency. For Chicago in particular see Alex Gottfried, Boss Cermak of Chicago: A Study of Political Leadership (Seattle: University of Washington, 1962); Nick A. Komons, "Chicago, 1893-1907: The Politics of Reform" (Ph.D Dissertation, George Washington University, 1961); Michael P. McCarthy, "Businessmen and Professionals in Municipal Reform: The Chicago Experience, 1887-1920" (Ph.D Dissertation, Northwestern University, 1970; Joel Tarr, A Study in Boss Politics: William Lorimer of Chicago (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1971).

various reform proposals and for what reasons? Did they actively oppose some of these reforms and attempt to implement ones of their own, and if so how did they go about this? These questions have remained unasked, often for want of a viable methodology.⁵

These questions can be asked of the charter reform movement because it encompassed widespread popular participation. Over half of the delegates to the convention which wrote the charter were private citizens, and neither political party controlled the charter's writing; newspapers heightened public interest by reporting extensively on the debates of the convention and throughout the city, various interest groups sent communiques to the body urging it to include specific provisions, and these provisions and their implications were widely discussed. The ensuing referendum campaign gave the citizens further opportunity to publicly debate the charter and to organize in support or opposition.

Middle and upper-class businessmen and professionals, reform organizations, business clubs, ethnic societies, organized labor, women, politicians, the Socialists, and other special interest groups all expressed their opinions in the course of the charter movement. Even blacks, a small and relatively powerless group in the city at this time, participated to some degree. All these groups attempted to directly influence the content of the charter and had the opportunity to accept

⁵Carl V. Harris in his work Political Power in Birmingham, 1871-1921 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee, 1977) has suggested using social economic interest groups to study the distribution of urban political power, and this interest group methodology is one which can be applied to studying cities in the Progressive Era.

or reject the finished product in a popular referendum (with the exception of the women, of course).

Because of the public character of the discussions, sources are abundant for determining the views of many groups in the city. The formal Proceedings of the charter convention contain the member's debates on all aspects of charter reform as well as the letters sent to that body by outside groups. English language dailies, as noted before, followed the movement closely, as did foreign language newspapers. In early 1906 several hundred of the city's ethnic societies formed into a common organization, the United Societies for Local Self-Government, for promoting and protecting their interests. Ethnic groups conducted their charter activities through the United Societies and because the Germans were among the principal leaders of this organization their daily newspapers are a particularly good source for information on these activities. The German newspapers reported extensively on the debates within the ethnic communities, the speeches of various ethnic leaders, and printed the pamphlets and bulletins issued by the United Societies on the questions of charter reform. The Socialist newspapers, the monthly journal and meeting minutes of the Chicago Federation of Labor, a special newsletter published by the United Societies, the manuscript collections and memoirs of prominent figures in the movement, the records and publications of organized groups in the city, among others all contain debates on charter reform.

The major issues and ideas of Chicago's charter reform movement, as well as the nature of the city's municipal problems were those facing all large cities in the United States during the Progressive Era. The

focus of this study is not the similarity of these issues but how the people of Chicago responded to their municipal problems and the measures introduced to solve them. It is fruitless to characterize Chicagoans as reformers or non-reformers. Most of them saw that there were deficiencies and corruption in their municipal government and they believed that reform was needed, but the issues involved were complex. Few argued against municipal efficiency but they differed on how to accomplish it and even about what efficiency meant; and those who agreed with each other on one issue did not necessarily agree on others.

The charter reform movement reveals quite strikingly the intense interest which so many different groups took in the political affairs of their city. They were determined to participate in the decision-making process and they clearly shared in the optimism of the Progressive Era that they could effect changes which would make their city a much better place. An examination of the problems confronting Chicago by the early twentieth century, how these directed residents to seek charter reform, and of the debates and activities of charter reform will show how these various groups participated in the movement, why they favored or opposed specific parts of the charter, how these reflected their ideas of a city as a community, and the roles which they believed the citizens themselves and the government should play in determining the growth and direction of that community.

CHAPTER II

CHICAGO IN THE 1890s

But there is another side to Chicago. There is the back side to her fifteen hundred million dollars of trade, her seven-teen thousand vessels, and her ninety thousand miles of rail. Away from the towering offices, lying off from the smiling parks, is a vast wilderness of shabby houses...

George Steevens¹

I

When, in 1893, the Columbian Exposition drew to Chicago tourists from around the world, visitors had strong reactions to what they saw. Some were overwhelmed by the Fair's gleaming "White City" constructed along grand classical lines. A traveler from India thought the Fair "a spectacle that exceeded all my expectations of grandeur"; while a Scottish author was dazzled by "this ethereal emanation of pure and un-economic beauty." Others, such as French diplomat Francois Bruwaert, equated the Fair with the city and predicted that "the most beautiful exhibition will be Chicago itself, its citizens, its business, its institutions, its progress."² Still others knew that the city needed to be judged by more than its World's Fair. Walking through the streets Italian playwright Guiseppe Giacosse was appalled by the sights.

I had two different impressions of Chicago, one sensual and immediate...the other intellectual and gradual....To the eye, the

¹Paul M. Angle, ed., Prairie State: Impressions of Illinois, 1673-1967. By Travelers and Other Observers (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1968), p. 426.

²Bessie L. Pierce, As Others See Chicago: Impressions of Visitors, 1673-1933 (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1933), p. 340, 352, and 358.

city appears abominable...I would not want to live there for anything in the world....During my stay of one week, I did not see anything in Chicago but darkness: smoke, clouds, dirt and an extraordinary number of sad and grieved persons....the rich metropolis gave me a sense of oppression so grave that I still doubt whether, beyond their factories, there exist celestial spaces.³

But Giacosse was also attracted by the city's vibrance.

The ideas of a social order, simple and progressive; the sight of so many ways open to human industry; the sight of so many natural resources, and of its increase in work--all these lead [the visitor] to a concept of actual life so clear, so open-minded, so large and so powerful, and to a certain apprehension of the future, which makes him forget quickly the disgust he suffered.⁴

Chicago merited both these observations yet not all visitors were as charitable as Giacosse. Probably the most vehement reaction was that of Rudyard Kipling. "Having seen it," Kipling declared of Chicago, "I urgently desire never to see it again. It is inhabited by savages. Its water is the water of the Hughli, and its air is dirt."⁵ Nor did Kipling appreciate the symbols of elegance and progress of which many Chicagoans were so proud. Advised to go to the Palmer House, one of the finest hotels, to observe the elite and powerful, Kipling could only see "a gilded and mirrored rabbit-warren... a huge hall of tessellated marble, crammed with people talking about money and spitting about everywhere."⁶ He departed Chicago convinced it was a vulgar and unlivable city. A less agitated British journalist, George Steevens, observed the relationship between Chicago's

³Ibid., p. 276-77.

⁴Ibid., p. 282-83.

⁵Ibid., p. 251.

⁶Ibid.

potential wealth, the poverty of many of its citizens, and civic corruption. In Chicago, he wrote, "everyone is fighting to be rich, is then straining to be refined, and nobody can attend to making the city fit to live in."⁷

The reactions of these men were visceral; they came from seeing the Fair, walking the streets, viewing the stockyards, and breathing smoke-ridden air. For a while the bright facade of the Fair hid much of the disorder and misery, but once the Fair closed visitors and residents alike were increasingly disturbed by what they saw. In 1898, the English reformer and member of the London County Council, Sidney Webb, visited Chicago. Webb came specifically to study the municipal government and its relationship to municipal problems. To his dismay he discovered that this government was hopelessly outmoded. Graft, corruption, and the serious problems observed by himself and previous visitors were the logical results, Webb believed, of a City Council which decided on municipal improvements "by passing around a list of improvements they were to vote on in that session, each alderman putting in whatever he wanted for his ward, and these were voted en bloc."⁸

Webb was quite correct in his assessment. Rapid industrialization, a burgeoning population, new technology, and the annexation of surrounding communities had changed the city dramatically in the past twenty-five years. The magnitude of Chicago's economic and technological achievements astounded both residents and visitors; but new problems resulting from these changes made life unpleasant for many of the

⁷Angle, p. 426.

⁸Ibid., p. 431.

residents and were beyond the abilities of the municipal government to solve adequately.

Chicago had emerged from the fire of 1871 badly scarred but determined to rebuild; even the depression could only slow, not blunt, the city's growth and by the end of the nineteenth century Chicago was the premier city of the midwest. The Union Stockyards and over three-fourths of the city's grain elevators and lumberyards had been outside the fire area. Burned out plants and factories, including the McCormick Reaper Works, were quickly rebuilt restoring the city's economic prominence in meatpacking, livestock, grain, and lumber. The railroad freight terminals on the edge of the city had also escaped the fire and when the railroads subsequently erected grand new passenger terminals people and goods once again flowed through Chicago.⁹

External events combined with the vigor of the city's residents to expand and alter Chicago's economy in the succeeding years. Between 1870 and 1890 millions of people moved into the midwest, advancing the population center of the United States westward over one hundred miles. Since eastern manufacturing and industrial cities were not easily accessible for these people Chicago, with its great transportation network and thriving business community was the logical place to ship raw materials for finishing and distributing on to customers.

⁹The best general account of Chicago's economic development is in Bessie L. Pierce, History of Chicago, vol. 3, The Rise of the Modern City 1871-1893 (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1957). For information after 1893 see Harold M. Mayer and Richard O. Wade, Chicago: Growth of a Metropolis (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1969); Charles Merriam, Chicago: A More Intimate View of Urban Politics (New York: Macmillan, 1929).

Chicago eagerly accepted this challenge and by the end of the century evolved from a city of commerce into the manufacturing and industrial center of the midwest. Heavy industry made substantial gains in this period: several smaller concerns combined to form the Illinois Steel Company in 1889 and its steel production soon worried Pittsburgh; the Pullman Palace Car Company, Grant Locomotive Works, and new firms building trolley cars boosted Chicago's equipment output, while six Chicago factories, led by McCormick (later International Harvester), produced one-seventh of the country's agricultural implements. Light industry also prospered. Between 1880 and 1890 printing and publishing was the city's second fastest growing industry and employed over 20,000 people by 1900, second only to New York City. The immigrant population of Chicago and other midwest cities attracted the brewing industry and the city's largest German brewery was also the fifth largest in the country. Clothing and dry goods manufacturing and selling increased significantly also. The ready-to-wear women's and children's garment business joined the already thriving men's wear establishments.

The growth of industry was accompanied by the development of mercantile houses which helped keep Chicago a center of commerce. Dry goods wholesalers supplied clothing and other Chicago products to eager customers. Montgomery Ward, the first nationwide mail order company, began operations in 1872 and when twenty-one years later Sears, Roebuck and Company opened, Chicago became the home of the country's two largest catalog stores. Wholesalers then founded retail department stores to serve local customers; the largest, Marshall

Field and Company, increased its retail trade from \$3.1 to 7.5 million in the twenty years after 1872.

To foster this economic growth and attract more industry and money to the city, Chicago businessmen introduced the concept of the organized industrial district where only businesses could locate. In a district plant space could be rented and services provided which an individual business might not be able to afford. One of the first, the Central Manufacturing District, was organized in 1890 by the Chicago Junction Railway and the Union Stockyards on a square mile tract of land north of the Stockyards and along the south branch of the Chicago River. Enterprises locating in the District had their own railway at their disposal; the Chicago Junction served the Stockyards and connected directly with every trackline entering the city. Other industrial districts were soon organized as businessmen hoped to show that Chicago was the most convenient and profitable city in which industry could locate.

People streamed to Chicago to fill the new jobs created by economic expansion. One half million people lived in Chicago in 1880. In ten years the population doubled, and by 1900 it reached almost 1.7 million.¹⁰ Annexation of surrounding areas accounted for part of this growth; between 1880 and 1890 the population of "old" Chicago grew from 503,000 to 792,000 with the remaining increase coming from annexed townships.¹¹ But, prior to annexation, the outside townships were

¹⁰U.S., Census Office, Tenth Census, 1880; Eleventh Census, 1890; Thirteenth Census, 1910.

¹¹Mayer and Wade, p. 176.

growing rapidly also and whether people were migrating directly into the city or its suburbs, they were coming to Chicago. For instance, until 1889 the Union Stockyards was located outside of the city limits, therefore many of the immigrants who found jobs in the Stockyards and wanted to live near their work lived outside the city proper.

The character of Chicago's population would be as significant for the city's future as its size. The foreign born and their children comprised roughly seventy-five percent of the total population for the two decades from 1890 to 1910, giving Chicago a greater percentage of residents from foreign stock than any other major United States city except New York and Milwaukee, and the highest percentage of foreign born outside of New York and Boston.¹² By the beginning of the twentieth century the nationalities of the new immigrants had changed as Polish, Italian, and Bohemian immigrants replaced the German, Irish, and Scandinavians who had arrived earlier. Of these six major nationality groups only the Irish ever lost population.

As the business community sought ways to perpetuate itself and help its members, so did the immigrants. To give shelter against an unfamiliar, often hostile environment, help maintain aspects of the group's culture, and provide social services which the city did not, immigrants established their own benevolent and fraternal societies. German Turnvereins, Bohemian Sokols, Swedish Svithiods, the Polish

¹²Howard Chudacoff, The Evolution of American Urban Society (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1975), p. 91. In Chicago 77.5% of the population was foreign stock; in both New York and Milwaukee it was 78.6%. Chicago's population was 35.7% foreign born compared to 40.4% for New York and 35.9% for Boston.

National Alliance, the Italian Unione e Fratellanze, and numerous other organizations were the focus of life for many of these people. In addition, a very active ethnic press served as the primary link between immigrants and their new city.¹³ Published in the native language these papers devoted much space to news of the home country, but they were also a major source of information about Chicago, reporting and explaining events and issues and how they affected their readership.

Unlike the business community however, immigrants remained for quite some time outside the mainstream of the community. Through the end of the century ethnic societies were fairly parochial organizations concerned with the needs of their own members. They showed slight interest in the problems of the city as a whole or of immigrants in general. The newspapers too treated municipal affairs only insofar as they affected their nationality group.

The experience of black Chicagoans matched in certain respects those of the European immigrants. Both groups remained outside the mainstream of politics and society for quite some time and relied on their own political, business, and social societies. However by the early twentieth century blacks were still only a tiny portion of Chicago's population. Although their aggregate numbers increased by ten times from 1870 to 1900 they were only 1.9 percent of the total population. Industrial growth had yet to attract large numbers

¹³ Among the older immigrant groups the Germans supported three daily newspapers, the Abendpost, Illinois Staats-Zeitung, and Chicagoer Freie Presse; the Irish had the Chicago Citizen; and the Swedish community published the Svenska Amerikanaren and Svenska-Tribunen (later the Svenska Tribunen-Nyheter). For the newer groups the Poles read the Dziennik Chicagoski, Narod Polski, and the daily Zgoda; the Italians had L'Italia and La Tribuna Italiana Transatlantica; and the Bohemians the Svornost and Denni Hlasatel.

of blacks and the problems of this small community touched very few of the white population. The small size of their community and racial discrimination combined to separate blacks decisively from the rest of the city and keep them dependent on their old traditions of self-help and self-protection¹⁴ while European immigrants gradually began to abandon their insularity and insert themselves into the larger community.

At the same time as the city was growing in size, technological developments were changing Chicago's appearance in other ways. Street car tracks, for example, crisscrossed the city. Eighty-six miles of cable car track had been laid by 1894 while simultaneously electric trolleys were being run experimentally along the old horse-drawn trolley tracks. The electric trolley cost far less than the cable cars and traveled at double the speed of the horse-drawn ones; the electric cars soon surpassed all other forms of rapid transit and by 1893 they ran over five hundred miles of track. To help relieve congestion in the streets the South Side Rapid Transit Company began constructing an elevated (El) line on the south side in 1890. Using steam locomotives the El carried passengers at fifteen miles per hour. Three years later there was a west side El, and by the end of the decade the Northwestern Elevated Railroad extended to Wilson Avenue which just eleven years previously had been almost three miles north of the city limits.¹⁵ Public transit gave people more freedom of

¹⁴The best source on this subject is Allan H. Spear, Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto, 1890-1920 (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1967).

¹⁵Mayer and Wade, p. 138-42 and 208-14.

movement and choice of living area and enabled the city to keep expanding. Gas, electricity, and telephone lines made living and business easier and Chicagoans naturally clamored for more and better services from these utilities.

But while Chicagoans exalted in their growth, their municipal problems worsened. All those new people needed places to live and schools for their children; there were more streets to be paved and cleaned, more garbage to be removed, graver sanitation problems, and a desperate need for more and better public transportation; the police and fire departments had to be improved and expanded. The municipal government could not meet the rising demands for services.

The deterioration of the city's housing stock is perhaps typical of the problems caused by growth. Unlike older eastern cities, before the fire most Chicagoans lived in single-family dwellings. Such buildings inefficiently used the city's limited available land and after 1871 new types of housing appeared: multi-family "flats" (apartment buildings) were constructed, especially along the street car routes, and by the end of the decade six-flats had become popular. While apartment buildings could be well-constructed, pleasant places to live, the wooden, cheaply built tenements which also appeared often were not. The chief virtue of tenements was that they were able to house many families. To relieve further the housing shortages, builders crammed together as many tenements as possible; little or no passageway was left between buildings, new tenements were erected in front of existing buildings situated on the back of a lot, and often these buildings were joined into one large structure--the so-called "double-decker." In the older parts of the city small frame single-

family houses were subdivided to accommodate several families. The results were neither pleasing to live in nor to see. "Street stretches beyond street of little houses, mostly wooden, begrimed with soot, rotting, falling to pieces," was what George Steevens observed as he walked through the poor sections of Chicago.¹⁶

Cheap housing accommodated the immigrants however and crowded tenements proliferated. The Department of Health officially assessed the state of much of the tenement housing in 1896 as "old, dilapidated or rotten, unventilated, badly lighted, badly drained, unprovided with proper facilities for disposal of excreta and without adequate or even necessary water supply."¹⁷ Five years later a private survey of three Chicago neighborhoods conducted by the City Homes Association confirmed the Department's earlier findings.¹⁸ Although as early as 1872 the city's health commissioners had asked the City Council to regulate conditions within and around tenements, the incessant need for cheap housing and a reluctance to interfere with private property frustrated these requests. At the turn of the century Chicago had no comprehensive building and sanitary code and the few building codes actually enacted were freely violated;¹⁹ the municipal government remained aloof from the problem.

¹⁶Angle, p. 426.

¹⁷Chicago Department of Health, Biennial Report (1895-1896), p. 63-64. See also Jane Addams, Twenty Years at Hull-House (New York: Macmillan, 1910).

¹⁸Robert Hunter, Tenement Conditions in Chicago: A Report by the Investigating Committee of the City Homes Association (Chicago: City Homes Association, 1901), passim.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 161-62.

Outside the buildings conditions were equally depressed. Garbage piled up rapidly, sewer systems were hopelessly inadequate, streets were often unpaved, unrepaired, and seldom cleaned. As with the housing stock, the municipal government's methods of handling these problems were obsolete. For instance the private firms hired to collect garbage seldom fulfilled their contracts in tenement neighborhoods and the ward garbage inspectors were political appointees who likewise tended to evade their responsibilities. Landlords contributed to the problem by providing too few collection boxes for their buildings allowing garbage to overflow and litter the streets, alleys, and yards.

The conditions of streets and sidewalks throughout the city again showed the two sides of Chicago's character. In its desire to "present a city to World's Fair visitors worthy of its much trumpeted glories" Chicago had resurfaced over one thousand miles of streets and doubled the number of its sidewalks between 1889 and 1893.²⁰ As usual, only specific areas benefitted from this civic improvement, so that Sidney Webb could comment three years after the Fair that the sidewalks "are nothing but rotten planks in the slum streets, with great holes rendering it positively dangerous to walk in the dark."²¹

To escape the crowding, dirt, and noise of the city many residents began moving out to the surrounding townships. The growth of street car lines and commuter railways enabled people to live in the suburbs and work in the city and increasing numbers of people took

²⁰Pierce, History of Chicago, vol. 3, p. 313.

²¹Angle, p. 431.

advantage of this new freedom. By the late 1880s the commuter railways carried 27,000 daily commuters into the city; cable cars and electric street railways transported thousands more.

Street car lines along Evanston (now Broadway), Clark, Lincoln, and Milwaukee avenues and new service on the Chicago and Northwestern and Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul railroads drew people north into the townships of Lake View, Rogers Park and Edgewater, and northwest into Jefferson Park. Chicagoans followed the Rock Island line southwest into Beverly and Morgan Park. The greatest expansion was to the south sections of the area serviced by the Illinois Central and the street cars along Cottage Grove Avenue. Hyde Park township, comprising forty-eight square miles grew from 15,700 residents to 133,000 in the 1880s;²² George Pullman located his factory town at the far south end of Hyde Park in this period. Expansion to the west proceeded more slowly. Located along Lake Michigan, Chicago's beautiful lakefront and the presence of large immigrant slums immediately west of the central city determined the city's elongated north to south configuration.

Cheaper land combined with new mass transit to attract families, but also industry to the suburbs. More and more industries located outside the city proper making it necessary for many workers to live there as well. The meat packers, for instance, concentrated the Stockyards in a one mile square area in Lake Township directly west of Hyde Park. The Rock Island railroad traversed the township and the

²²City of Chicago Department of Development and Planning, Historic City: The Settlement of Chicago (Chicago, 1976), p. 43.

trolleys of the Chicago City Railway company allowed people to commute throughout the township's thirty-six square miles. Between 1880 and 1890 the population of Lake multiplied more than five times from 18,000 to just over 100,000.²³

Real estate speculators quickly capitalized on these desires and began developing the areas outside the city limits enticing people to the charms and advantages of suburban living. S.E. Gross and Company, for example, missed few tricks in selling its properties. Its handbills promoted Lake View in 1883 as an ideal location, "only three blocks from present terminus of Street Cars. One of the most pleasant rides in the city, passing in front of Lincoln Park along a finely shaded area, and away from the streets leading to the to the cemeteries." The handbill further promised churches, schools, water pipes, and passenger trains running between Lake View and downtown.²⁴

Realtors ran free excursion trains to their building sites where they provided potential customers with free lunches, fireworks, and band concerts. They appealed to different income groups in their advertising. The wealthier citizens were urged to move to Hyde Park, Kenwood, or Morgan Park where they could buy spacious single-family homes on large lots. For those who could not afford such amenities cheaper housing was available. After the fire of 1871 Chicago building codes outlawed wooden buildings in the downtown area and realtors now directed their appeals to people looking for less expensive housing

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Photocopy in Mayer and Wade, p. 156.

outside of the "brick area." Lake View, proclaimed the Gross and Company handbill was "Outside Fire Limits! You Can Build Wooden Houses!"

The flood of people into the townships caused more municipal problems than it solved and led groups in the suburbs and the city to consider annexing these areas to the city.²⁵ For township dwellers annexation quickly became the only way to relieve their seemingly insurmountable fiscal problems. Each township financed its own public utilities, school system, police and fire departments, and other essential services. Because many of the townships were commuter suburbs with little industry they did not have an adequate tax base to pay for these services. Even those with a broader tax base desired annexation for several reasons. Some believed their local police forces were too small and weak to control growing labor problems; others hoped it would rid them of existing political corruption; and all wanted to use the city's well-developed water supply system. On the other hand Chicagoans favored annexation because they wanted to recapture the wealth and industry which had fled to the suburbs and acquire the people and territory which would enable Chicago to become a great metropolitan area.

Leading the annexation movement, the Citizens' Association of Chicago in 1887 asked the state General Assembly to enact a law permitting willing townships to consolidate their governments with the

²⁵The best accounts of the annexation movement are in McCarthy, p. 1-21, Pierce, History of Chicago, vol. 3, p. 331-33, and Mayer and Wade, p. 154-78.

city. The Legislature agreed and citizens from Hyde Park, Lake, Lake View, Cicero, and Jefferson Park townships petitioned for annexation. But not all suburbanites favored annexation which first had to be approved by the township voters at a special referendum. Some opponents predicted the extension of Chicago's fire laws and building codes would price workers out of the home buying market by allowing the building only of the more expensive brick houses; some feared that after joining the city the saloon interests in Chicago would wipe out the township prohibition districts; others simply wanted to keep the evils of the big city out of the suburbs; and many local politicians, of course, knew that annexation would ruin them. In a November 1887 referendum citizens of Lake and Lake View rejected annexation while those in Hyde Park, Cicero, and Jefferson Park voted to join the city.

The votes were nullified several months later when the Illinois Supreme Court ruled the annexation law unconstitutional. Although this disappointed the annexationists, it gave them the opportunity to reorganize and perhaps this time persuade recalcitrant voters of the benefits of becoming part of the city. In 1889 therefore they secured a new law from the state legislature and the Chicago City Council helped the cause by passing two ordinances guaranteeing the preservation of township prohibition districts after incorporation, and prohibiting the extension of Chicago's building codes to new areas without their consent. Despite the continued opposition of local politicians and a few other prominent suburbanites--George Pullman vigorously resisted the incorporation of his company town and meat

packer Philip Armour made a deal with local politicians in Lake township to oppose annexation in return for a low tax assessment on his company property²⁶—the voters of Hyde Park, Lake, Lake View, Cicero, and Jefferson Park this time accepted annexation.

The city continued annexing suburban areas for the next four years, mainly to the southwest. In 1893 the far north townships of Rogers Park and West Ridge joined Chicago and although a few areas on the western periphery were added later Chicago's geographic expansion ended. The city's total area had been increased in this period from thirty-five square miles to one hundred and ninety.

II

The expansion of the city offered the chance of enormous profits for those who could provide needed municipal services. Because few Americans of the late nineteenth century believed in municipal ownership or operation of utilities, cities enfranchised private companies to build and run gas, electric, telephone, and transit systems. These franchises generally required the company to pay an initial fee to the city for using the municipal property along which trolley tracks, gas, electric or telephone lines would be laid; in return for this fee the company could keep all profits derived from the utility.

Greedy entrepreneurs and city officials milked the franchise system for personal gain paying little attention to the consequences for the city. Awarding franchises at its discretion the City Council, led by Alderman Johnny Powers, perfected the art of franchise graft.

²⁶McCarthy, p. 13-14.

It granted street franchises one block at a time to the highest bidder, required companies to purchase new franchises if they wanted to make a major change such as converting a horsecar line to a cable or trolley system, and sold street rights separately to each utility.²⁷ That these practices drove up utility costs and often resulted in multiple systems along one street bothered the Council little. Bribery flourished as prospective owners did whatever was necessary to obtain a franchise: the right amount of money to the right aldermen secured a franchise; additional sums could help eliminate competitors or lower property assessments for tax purposes. As a final measure of its lack of concern for the quality of municipal services provided, the Council rarely exercised its right to place certain performance requirements in the franchises. Once a company paid the initial fee it was virtually free to do as it pleased. One result of these practices was that between 1860 and 1890 sixty different companies held rights to 175 city streets.²⁸

The gas trust scandals of the 1890s illustrate the deplorable consequences of the franchise system. After receiving a suitable fee the City Council in 1894 first passed the Universal Gas ordinance giving the Gas Trust (nine companies combined specifically for this purpose) rights to lay gas mains anywhere in the city. This ordinance in effect gave the gas trust monopoly rights to decide when and where mains would be laid and how much customers would be charged. Knowing

²⁷Ray Ginger, Altgeld's America (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1958; reprint edition New York: New Viewpoints, 1973), p. 93-94; Lloyd Wendt and Herman Kogan, Bosses in Lusty Chicago (Bloomington: University of Indiana, 1943), p. 39.

²⁸Ginger, p. 94.

that more money could still be made from gas franchises, a year later several aldermen had the Council grant the Ogden Gas Trust a fifty year franchise with blanket gas rights throughout the city as long as it sold the gas at ninety cents per 1000 cubic feet. Since the original Gas Trust sold at \$1.20 this presumably would cut the Trust out of the market. The catch was that Ogden Gas existed only on paper and the new ordinance was a blatant attempt to force the Gas Trust to buy up the rights of Ogden Gas.²⁹ When they did the money went straight into the aldermen's pockets.

Even worse for Chicago residents was the traction situation created by Charles Yerkes. After serving time in prison in Philadelphia for embezzlement Yerkes arrived in Chicago and began acquiring traction franchises. He quickly laid 250 miles of track under franchises to eight separate companies and effectively controlled the city's transit system. Yerkes helped finance his empire by plundering the riders. Buying franchises block by block he put more than one line along a route and refused to issue transfers between lines; riders thus had to pay multiple fares if they used separate companies. To save money Yerkes also regularly ran fewer cars than were necessary on his routes, contemptuously observing that it was "the straphangers who pay the dividends."³⁰ Neither in awarding franchises nor in running the streetcars did the Council or Yerkes consider customer convenience, the price of

²⁹Komons, p. 123 and 135.

³⁰Carter Harrison, Stormy Years: The Autobiography of Carter H. Harrison, Five Times Mayor of Chicago (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1935), p. 110-12; Wendt and Kogan, p. 38.

fares, or what would benefit the city.

Chicago's City Council, its traditional party system, and the interference of the state legislature encouraged these abuses and left many residents feeling powerless. The alderman manipulated the franchise system so well because the city had a strong council form of government. The Council drew up the budget, created new boards and departments, accepted and rejected all mayoral appointments, enacted a broad range of ordinances, and distributed city jobs and franchises. In the hands of less than scrupulous men, politics became a free-for-all in which jobs, franchises, and favorable ordinances were for sale.³¹

The traditional political parties had neither the inclination nor the power to clean up the situation. Unlike other American cities (and highly ironic in light of its future political development) Chicago had no solid political machine or power boss in this period. Instead, at any one time several factions, or "rings" as they were popularly called, jostled for political power. Neither party was cohesively unified. Three factions of Republicans appealed to different segments of the population. Business, the press, reformers, and the middle-class residents of the city's outlying districts supported Charles Deneen; north siders, particularly the Germans, followed Fred Busse; and William Lorimer, the closest the Republicans came to having a political boss, dominated west side politics.

The Democratic party was hardly better. John Hopkins and his lieutenant Roger Sullivan controlled a party machine strong enough to elect a number of their people to the Council and keep them in line

³¹Hoyt King, "The Reform Movement in Chicago," The Annals 25 (March, 1905), p. 235.

on crucial votes. Hopkins was elected mayor in 1893 and 1895 and was behind some of the more notorious franchise grant scandals of the period, but his group was not strong enough to prevent rival Democrats from winning the mayor's office in 1897. Carter Harrison Jr., whose father had been assassinated in 1893 while mayor, was himself elected to that office four times from 1897 to 1903. Personally popular among the voters Harrison advocated reforming the Council and represented moderate reform-minded Democrats. The more radical reformers and many workers backed Edward Dunne who successfully ran for mayor in 1905. Although the Harrison and Dunne factions often supported one another such support was neither automatic nor without reciprocity. In 1905 Harrison backers forced Dunne to accept one of their men as candidate for city treasurer in return for their support of Dunne's nomination.³²

Lacking internal unity, neither party nor any one faction was strong enough to control the city. Instead all scrambled for whatever offices and political influence they could get and spent more time and energy attacking opponents than the city's growing problems.

The actions of the state legislature greatly exacerbated Chicago's problems. This body, for instance, had the power to set certain terms for granting municipal franchises and its disregard for Chicago's residents and their needs in these matters contributed to the franchise mess. Charles Yerkes had many friends in the legislature and in 1895 he persuaded both houses to extend several of his traction franchises for ninety-nine years without paying compensation. Fortunately, Governor Altgeld vetoed this measure but two years later the legislature

³²Harrison, p. 252.

passed the Allen Bill authorizing the City Council to grant streetcar franchises for terms up to fifty years instead of the prevailing twenty year limit. Since several of Yerkes franchises expired in 1903, he attempted to push quickly through the Council his extensions but outraged voters who knew this meant losing all control of the street railways for another fifty years defeated all state legislators who had voted for the Allen Bill and forced the Council to deny Yerkes' request.³³

As Yerkes' dealings with the City Council and state legislature show, the possibilities for corruption and political machinations in the late nineteenth century were great. These possibilities were enhanced by the complex structure of the city's government. Until 1870 this governing structure and all municipal powers were fixed by a charter from the state. This individual agreement enabled the legislature to enact laws which applied only to Chicago simply by changing a piece of the charter. Though the city often had cause to resent the state's arbitrary interference--when the legislature abolished the office of High Constable in 1839 and failed to inform the city for two months, Chicagoans sarcastically suggested that they be informed more quickly when it decided "to remove Chicago from the shore of Lake Michigan"--it was possible to replace an outmoded charter entirely.³⁴ The city had in fact requested and received new charters in 1851 and 1863.

The state constitution of 1870 however replaced such charters with a single general incorporation act applying to all cities and

³³Ibid., p. 140 and 174-75.

³⁴Albert Lepawsky, Home Rule for Metropolitan Chicago (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1932), p. 114.

towns regardless of size and Chicago lost this measure of flexibility. Thereafter it operated within the strictures of a law designed to apply as well to towns of one thousand inhabitants and to reserve significant powers to the legislature.³⁵ Able to exercise only those powers specifically conferred by the incorporation act and possessing no general or residual powers which would allow it to respond to needs as they arose, the municipal corporation found itself constitutionally unable to perform vital functions at the very time the city was growing rapidly.³⁶ As a result, Chicago was governed by a maze of overlapping administrative and fiscal authorities. In addition to the municipal corporation, the Cook County Board of Commissioners, the Board of Education, the Library Board, three Park Boards, the Sanitary District and others were independent governing and taxing bodies exercising various powers within the city's boundaries.

The development of the Sanitary District best illustrates the consequences of this situation. State law limited municipal indebtedness to one percent of the area's full property valuation. By the 1880s Chicago had reached that figure and could not raise enough new revenue to construct desperately needed sewers and a drainage canal. Knowing that the legislature would not change the tax laws, the city followed the only avenue open to it and persuaded the state to create the Metropolitan Sanitary District in 1889.³⁷ Ninety-two percent of the territory

³⁵ Illinois, Constitution (1870), article 4, section 22. For the early history of Chicago's municipal government see Hugo Grosser, Chicago: A Review of Its Governmental History, 1837-1906 (Chicago, 1906).

³⁶ Lepawsky, p. 115.

³⁷ Charles Merriam, Report of an Investigation of the Municipal Revenues of Chicago (Chicago: City Club of Chicago, 1906), p. 8-9.

and ninety-six percent of the population serviced by the District were within the city limits but Chicago had no control over its activities. Instead a nine member board of trustees was authorized to choose the District's minor officials, construct all sewers, buy and sell real estate, borrow money, issue bonds, and levy and collect taxes and special assessments.³⁸

Similarly Chicago had little control over the other governing bodies. Although the mayor selected the school and library board members, there his authority ended. The powers of these boards were delegated directly by the legislature and each board prepared its own budget and levied taxes independently of the city. The three park boards, created by the legislature in 1869, managed all park lands and levied taxes for park purposes within their individual jurisdictions.

Chicago's powers were further diminished by the operation of the Cook County government. The County Board of Commissioners administered both the jail and public hospital although these institutions were located in and much more likely to be used by the city since only ten percent of the county's area and population was outside Chicago. Worst of all, from Chicago's point of view, the county assessed the city's property and collected the taxes on it. This important revenue was then remitted back to the city on a schedule set by the state legislature.³⁹

Even in those instances where Chicago had the power to provide essential services its efforts were often duplicated by the other

³⁸ McCarthy, p. 47.

³⁹ Ibid.; Merriam, Municipal Revenues, p. 9-10.

authorities who were empowered to provide the same services within their jurisdictions. For instance, the City, Sanitary District, and each park board maintained separate police forces. The park boards operated their own electric light plants and one, the Lincoln Park Board, had its own waterworks. The park boards had the authority to pave, repair, and clean streets within park lands while the municipality provided this service for the remainder of the city.⁴⁰ Besides being inefficient this fragmented system created a wide disparity in how and at what cost these services were distributed among the city's residents.

Despite the vital interest of the people of the city in the decisions and actions of these various governing bodies, many of the offices were non-elective. The mayor, as previously noted, appointed the school and library board members; the Commissioners of the West and Lincoln Park Boards were appointed by the Governor while the Circuit Court judges selected those for the South Park Board. The fifteen Cook County Commissioners were elected county-wide but only five of these represented the city.

Perhaps the most detrimental aspect of this fragmented governing system was that it produced an equally disjointed revenue system. The state designated all of Cook County as one tax district and limited the percentage amount of property taxes which could be levied in any one district. Each taxing body within the district was in turn allowed only a fixed percent of this tax base. Throughout the 1890s the tax base of Cook County remained around five percent of the aggregate of

⁴⁰Merriam, Municipal Revenues, p. 71-72.

its assessed property value; in 1901 the Juul Law legally fixed the tax limit at this five percent.⁴¹ Chicago's share of the tax base for corporate purposes was set at two percent of the assessed property valuation by the Revenue Act of 1879 and the remaining authorities had rates fixed out of the other three percent. Only the school board levies for school buildings and a portion of the Sanitary District's taxes were exempt from these restrictions.⁴² While this system assured all governing bodies of receiving tax revenues, it was completely inflexible. Funds could not be transferred from one taxing body with less need to another which might be critically short of money. Nor was the city free to decide on a yearly basis which areas were most in need and allocate funds accordingly.

Although property taxes were a major source of revenue for local governments, they could also issue bonds to finance municipal projects. Here too the system worked against Chicago because each taxing body could incur bonded indebtedness only up to one percent of its full property valuation. When Chicago had reached this limit in the 1880s the independent Sanitary District was the result; in other cases the city simply postponed making much needed improvements in municipal services.

This complex, decentralized governing structure sustained the political factionalism which so easily bred corruption. Comparing the city's government with its politics, political science Professor Charles

⁴¹Ibid., p. 10-12. The Revenue Law of 1898 fixed a ratio of one-fifth between the assessed and real value of property, therefore the tax limit of Cook County was one percent of the total real property value.

⁴²Ibid., p. 6 and 12.

Merriam observed ⁴³

Just as there is no centralized control of community affairs, but a division of authority among eight principal and many minor governments, so there is no Chicago boss, but a series of four or five major factions and innumerable minor ones distributed among the three thousand precincts of Chicago and Cook County.

Each of these factions knew that if it lost out in one area such as the mayor's office, there was still the chance of obtaining power and patronage jobs elsewhere in the Sanitary District, park systems, or the county government. Self-serving men outside of government quickly learned how to trade favors with the men who were attracted to public offices offering such potential for personal gain.

III

This untenable structure of government was retained in large part because of the hostility Chicago faced from the rest of Illinois. Sectional differences had plagued Illinois throughout the century. Settlers from the south and southeast United States had followed the Ohio, Wabash, and Mississippi Rivers into the southern and south-central parts of the state while migrants from the northeast and mid-Atlantic areas of the country came via the Great Lakes and overland roads into northern Illinois. Contact between the two areas of the state and their diverse populations remained distant until the opening of the Illinois Central railroad in 1856. Shortly thereafter southern Illinois' sympathy for the South" cause in the Civil War aroused new sectional enmities.

By the late nineteenth century these differences had evolved into a serious urban-rural conflict which would intrude into all attempts

⁴³Merriam, Chicago, p. 98.

Chicago subsequently undertook to reform its municipal government. The majority of the state's inhabitants were from western and northern European Protestant stock and lived in rural areas and small towns. As these areas began steadily losing population after 1880 those people who remained were increasingly alarmed by Chicago's development into a vast, urban, industrial center with a population and lifestyle very different from their own. Twenty percent of the state's population was foreign born in 1890, but forty percent of Chicago's residents were foreign born, and immigrants kept coming into the city. The bulk of the newer immigrants, moreover, were Catholics and Jews from eastern and southern Europe.⁴⁴

Reflecting the fears of their constituents downstate legislators sought ways to minimize the city's influence in state affairs. Chicago held only seven of the eighty-five seats in the legislature in 1870, and several legislators tried to restrict its future influence by permanently limiting its representation to the General Assembly by a clause in the new constitution. They proposed replacing the current scheme of proportional representation with representation by county; if every county had an equal number of representatives, Cook County would never have any political weight in Illinois no matter how large its population.⁴⁵

Enough of the representatives at the Constitutional Convention disliked this scheme and Chicago was saved from this initial attempt at

⁴⁴Adna F. Weber, The Growth of Cities in the Nineteenth Century: A Study in Statistics (New York: Macmillan, 1899; reprint ed., New York: Cornell, 1967), p. 211 and 306. Sixty-five percent of all rural areas in Illinois (those smaller than a town of one thousand) lost population between 1880 and 1890.

⁴⁵William B. Philip, "Chicago and the Downstate: A Study of Their Conflicts" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1940), p. 16-17.

restriction. But downstaters, regardless of party allegiance, kept proposing new schemes in the General Assembly. In 1891 the Republicans, controlling both houses, refused to reapportion the state on the basis of the new federal census. The following year the situation changed little when the Democrats gained control of the legislature for the first time. Nine reapportionment bills were introduced before one finally passed in 1893. The reason for the legislature's reluctance was obvious: the Chicago-Cook County contingent was increased by fifty percent to fifteen Senators and forty-five Representatives. Downstate retained two-thirds of the total seats and a tenuous command of the Assembly.⁴⁶

The knowledge that it was only a matter of time before the city would be large enough to overshadow all of state politics affected Chicago and downstate relations for the rest of the decade. Hostile legislators stepped-up their campaign to limit representation permanently, and when their bills failed to pass they adopted other obstructionist tactics. They often rejected legislation sought by Chicago when its representatives refused to vote for restriction; at other times support for a general state law distasteful to the city but desired by downstate was the price Chicago was forced to pay for obtaining any legislation it desired. At still other times downstate legislators enacted laws for Chicago over the protests of its representatives and residents. The Yerkes traction bills were among the most blatant examples of this practice.

After the turn of the century antagonism worsened as shifting patterns of population made the rural and small town areas of Illinois

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 36-41.

increasingly frightened of Chicago. According to the census of 1900 over fifty percent of the state for the first time lived in urban areas. Since only eleven cities in the state had populations exceeding 20,000, sixty percent of the urbanites resided in Chicago. While the city's population had increased by 600,000 since the previous census, forty-nine counties had lost population.⁴⁷ The political effects of this population distribution were manifested in the 1901 reapportionment which gave Cook County nineteen Senators and fifty-seven Representatives--one-third the membership of each house and a potential veto power over many important bills requiring a two-thirds majority for passage. A bi-partisan coalition of downstaters immediately introduced a bill to restrict Cook County's representation permanently to one-third the total of each house. The measure failed to secure the necessary two-thirds.⁴⁸

Chicago thus entered the new century at a virtual standstill in the state legislature. It could generally thwart deleterious legislation aimed at itself, but rarely could it secure the relief it needed to cope with its serious urban problems. Downstate legislators for their part strove to control Chicago before it controlled the state by continuing their efforts to restrict Chicago's representation and to enforce general state laws inimical to the lifestyle and needs of the city's diverse and growing citizenry. Ultimately as more and more Chicago residents became preoccupied with finding ways to alleviate their municipal problems and reform their corrupt and inefficient government, the antagonism between city and state pushed them to demand municipal home rule.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 2 and 50.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 51-54.

CHAPTER III

INTEREST GROUPS AND ISSUES

By the 1890s many Chicagoans agreed that the existing governing structure was failing in many ways to provide crucial municipal services and to make the city a decent, safe, and democratic place to live. There was, however, little consensus about what measures ought to be taken to remedy this situation. One striking characteristic of the 1890s and early twentieth century was the fervent involvement of many different groups in municipal affairs, often with the realization that this involvement was absolutely necessary to protect their particular interests. Business and labor sought ways to protect and promote their interests, and their actions and attitudes in municipal affairs were often shaped by their mutual antagonism; women had their own, often conflicting ideas; and there were also a variety of groups organized to attack specific municipal problems. The organizations which these groups formed, the reform proposals they set forth, their responses to the actions and ideas of fellow citizens, and the priorities they gave to certain issues and not to others, reveal much about what these Chicagoans wanted from their city and the roles they hoped to play in its future development.

I

As a booming industrial city, Chicago attracted aspiring entrepreneurs from throughout the country. By 1890 men like Marshall Field,

George Pullman, Philip Armour, and Gustavus Swift were building companies and fortunes, and they and other businessmen organized business clubs to promote their interests.¹ In 1877 several prominent merchants and manufacturers formed the Commercial Club dedicated to advancing "by social intercourse and friendly interchange of views the prosperity of the city of Chicago"; the club's membership was limited to sixty men "outstanding in the most important branches of Chicago business life."² Other businessmen followed this lead and organized other clubs with similar aims, among them the Mercantile, Sunset, Industrial, and Merchant's clubs, the Association of Commerce, and the Illinois Manufacturer's Association. Through these organizations the business community directed its response to issues and events in the city, a response which one later observer characterized as a clash between the "respective rights of the many and the few" in the community.³ The business clubs lobbied for favorable business and tax legislation from the city government, demanded a greater voice in how their tax dollars were being spent, particularly in the running of the public schools, and championed the franchise system as a cornerstone of free enterprise at a time when so many others seriously questioned its efficacy.

Nowhere did the desires of business conflict as intensely as with those of its own workers, and nowhere was business more determined to win. Chicago's working classes had a tradition of activism that went back

¹Pierce, History of Chicago, vol. 3, passim. Armour, for example had been a ditch-digger in the 1850s; in 1890 he was worth \$25 million.

²Ibid., p. 190.

³Merriam, Chicago, p. 110.

to the 1880s when the Central Labor Union---founded in 1884 by Albert Parsons, an anarchist who spurned the eight hour movement in favor of abolishing the wage system altogether---began to attract dissatisfied radicals out of the more moderate Chicago Trades and Labor Assembly. Businessmen responded to this turn of events by inviting in the armed forces: in 1885 the Commercial Club gave the federal government land for Fort Sheridan, and the Merchant's Club donated land for building the Great Lakes naval training station. Militance on both sides led swiftly to the Haymarket "massacre" of 1886, an event that solidified the fear and hatred of both sides and shaped the attitudes of the labor movement toward municipal affairs over the succeeding decades.⁴

The background to the massacre was a strike at the McCormick Reaper Works. The company, which the previous year had been forced to grant a fifteen percent wage increase, provoked the strike by locking out unionized workers in an attempt to break the union; non-union replacements were hired and the plant became a scene of frequent clashes between the union pickets and the police and Pinkertons brought in to protect the replacements. On May 3 two union men were killed and several wounded by police who fired into a crowd harassing the new workers, and the city's radical labor leaders responded by summoning all laboring people to protest at Haymarket Square the next evening. Though tensions rose the next day when crowds clashed again with the police at the reaper works, the meeting itself was disappointingly small and the speeches fairly uninspiring and non-inflammatory until the police (against Mayor Harrison's orders) waded into the crowd ordering them to disperse. A bomb exploded

⁴The best account of Haymarket remains Henry David, The History of the Haymarket Affair (New York: 1936).

in the midst of the police, killing seven.

The reaction of the city leaders to the massacre was not such as to persuade workers that they could expect fair treatment from the authorities. Convinced that a worker's revolution was imminent, newspapers, prominent citizens, and law enforcement officials hysterically accused the meeting's organizers of inciting the violence and demanded they be brought to trial. Advised by the state's attorney to "make the raids and look up the law afterward" the police conducted a ruthless sweep of working-class neighborhoods rounding up trade unionists, foreigners, and just about anyone they wanted.⁵ The business community demanded increased police and citizen vigilance against potential labor agitation and took its own steps to assure citizen participation.⁶ Eight men were tried and convicted of murder before a judge and jury who were presented with no bomb thrower and no evidence linking the accused to the act; despite some citizen protest against the injustice of the trial proceedings four of these men were subsequently hanged.

Haymarket decimated the radical labor organizations although remnants remained in the socialist camp led by Thomas Morgan. The majority of the trades unions regrouped into the Chicago Federation of Labor which by the turn of the century had a membership of over two hundred affiliated local unions. The majority of workers were never as radical as the leaders of the Central Labor Union but they deeply resented

⁵Ginger, p. 49.

⁶Prominent businessmen formed the First Council of Conservators' League of America to counteract "recent labor troubles" and guard against future such disturbances; Cyrus McCormick, Philip Armour, Marshall Field, and George Pullman were members of a Citizens' Association committee which offered to help the police in these matters; and on the state level the legislature passed the Merritt Conspiracy Bill to facilitate the arrest and conviction of suspected radicals. See Pierce, vol. 3, p. 281 and 289.

the trial and the anti-labor hysteria which followed Haymarket.

If workers needed any further evidence of business hostility they received it over the next several years. Many businessmen in the outlying townships, for instance, supported annexation in 1889 because the township police provided them inadequate protection in times of labor unrest. With annexation these forces would be combined with the Chicago police and become a much stronger deterrent against strikers and demonstrators of all kinds.⁷ In 1894 business carried its repressive tendencies further. When workers struck the huge Pullman Works to protest pay cuts which were not accompanied by a reduction of their rent and bills in the company owned housing and stores, businessmen repeatedly urged the Governor and then President Cleveland to send in troops. Governor Altgeld refused but the President complied and federal troops broke up the strike.

Such events convinced laboring men that they could expect little support from either their government or fellow citizens and that for the future they had to cultivate their own political power. The CFL therefore began developing a political program for its membership to follow. And a major premise of this program was that organized labor would consciously and actively work for a municipal government and political system which better met its needs in the community.

Women too were becoming increasingly aware of themselves as members of their community and seeking ways to participate in its affairs. By the late nineteenth century many of them were working for reform and they were often able to cut across class lines both to support one

⁷McCarthy, p. 14-15

another's causes and to work toward common municipal goals. Women began to participate actively in municipal affairs in the mid-1870s when several prominent women seeking to be "socially useful" founded the Chicago Woman's Club. Like similar organizations throughout the country the Club was initially a place for women to meet and listen to speakers. But such passive affairs dissatisfied many members and in 1876 they reorganized the Club into departments—home, education, philanthropy, reform, and later art and literature, and philosophy and science—for discussing, studying, and acting on current problems.

The first projects undertaken by the Club reflected its concern for the special problems of women and children. It sponsored the appointment of a woman to the Board of Education and a woman doctor to the County Insane Asylum, helped establish kindergartens in the public schools, and supported the activities of the Women and Children's Protective League. Nine hundred women paid a \$15 entrance fee and \$10 yearly dues to participate in the Club's work.⁸

The club idea appealed also to other groups of women, many of whom had neither the spare time, money, nor inclination to join an organization dominated by the city's elite; instead many middle-class and working-class women formed neighborhood clubs. While these local clubs did not abandon the city-wide perspective of the Woman's Club, they also focused much of their attention to solving specific neighborhood problems. This was particularly important in the poorer areas where municipal services were inadequate at best. In the Hull-House settlement neighborhood, for instance, immigrant women banded together to

⁸ Adade Wheeler and Marlene Wortman, The Roads They Made: Women in Illinois History (Chicago: Charles Kerr, 1977), p. 63-64.

clean up the streets, get better garbage collection services from the city, and attack the frightful health and sanitation conditions of the area.⁹

Women also worked through labor organizations. As more and more women had joined the labor force they discovered the need for unions to protect their economic interests. But when they received only scant support from their male counterparts Chicago women formed their own craft and trade unions and labor federations. Through the Chicago Working Women's Union, the Ladies Federated Labor Union, and later the Chicago chapter of the National Women Trades Union League working women expanded their activities into municipal affairs.

The experience of the Chicago Federation of Teachers illustrates this process. Catherine Goggins and Margaret Haley organized the predominantly female elementary school teachers into the CFT in 1897 to fight the Board of Education's threats to suspend their three year old pension fund. The next year the Board withdrew the first salary raise the teachers had received since 1877 and the leaders of the Federation suspected that municipal corruption and waste lay behind the city's inability to pay the teachers as well as the city's inability to provide public services. The CFT launched its own municipal reform campaign by suing the city to collect unpaid public utility taxes.¹⁰

Because they shared a common interest in the needs and problems of women, women's groups worked together on many issues despite class

⁹Addams, p. 203-205.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 230; Wheeler and Wortman, p. 86-87; Margaret Haley, "My Story", unpublished autobiography in Chicago Federation of Teachers Papers, Boxes 32 and 33, Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

and cultural differences. The Woman's Club lent its support to numerous labor activities: it helped the teachers fight for a pension fund, supported the founding and activities of the Women's Trade Union League, and conducted investigations of the working conditions of women in various industries. And though Marshall Field was a prestigious member of Chicago's economic and social circles, and possibly a good friend of their husband's, clubwomen published an expose of working conditions during the Christmas rush in his and other major department stores.¹¹ Working women joined clubwomen in campaigns for social reforms. Elizabeth Morgan, founder of the Ladies Federated Labor Union, helped organize clubs throughout the state into the Illinois Woman's Alliance, and together the Union and Alliance worked to enforce truancy and compulsory education laws and to pass the Factory Act of 1893 which regulated child labor and mandated the eight hour day for women and children.

Women from all these social and economic groups quickly agreed that the key to the success of their efforts was suffrage, for without this power they were constantly dependent on the good will and acquiescence of men. Working women were tired of having to rely on men to protect their economic interests¹²; other women recognized that having to plead for passage of reform legislation as a personal favor, as was often the case, was both distasteful and inefficient. A bill pertaining to the Juvenile Court languished in the legislature, for instance, until one of the city's leading clubwomen, Louise DeKoven Bowen, met with a prominent legislator and convinced him that nothing in it conflicted

¹¹Wheeler and Wortman, p. 85.

¹²Chicago Federation of Labor, Minutes, April 4, 1906.

with important interests of any of his colleagues. Jane Addams experienced the same type of problem of having to appeal to all male voters when she tried unsuccessfully to oust her ward's notoriously corrupt alderman Johnny Powers.¹³

The right to vote therefore became a vital issue for all these women. Some of them favored total suffrage while others sought to vote only in municipal and state elections. In both cases they followed the lead of the National American Woman Suffrage Association and inaugurated petition campaigns throughout the state. In 1893 the legislature received more petitions on suffrage than on any other issue and these petitions kept coming in the succeeding years. Women looked everywhere for support. In 1899 the Chicago teachers collected the signatures of 25,000 union men, supposedly strongly anti-suffrage, on their petitions.¹⁴ By the turn of the century however women had secured only the right to vote for school board members. As a result they entered the new century more determined than ever to make getting the vote one of their highest priorities.

To address better a wide range of municipal problems many of the city's prominent men organized a number of civic reform groups. The first of these organizations, the Citizens' Association, was founded in 1874 by a group of men seeking to upgrade the city's fire protection methods. After their initial successes in this endeavor, the members of the Association resolved to become a general watchdog group, monitoring the conduct of elected public officials for evidence of misconduct and

¹³Louise DeKoven Bowen, Growing up with a City (New York: Macmillan, 1926), p. 107; Addams, p. 222-223.

¹⁴Wheeler and Wortman, p. 106-107.

corruption and examining existing public policies and recommending new ones. The Association's first venture into municipal politics came in 1875 when the city voted on the Cities and Villages Act of the new constitution. Since under the terms of the Act Chicago would retain its strong Council government, a system which the Association firmly believed encouraged corruption, it drafted a substitute law creating a strong executive department and weakening the Council.¹⁵ The attempt failed as the voters ratified the Cities and Villages Act, but the Association had commenced a campaign to reform the municipal government which it would wage over the succeeding decades.

For two decades the Citizen's Association remained the city's principal civic organization. Then in 1893, in the midst of a new nationwide depression which was severely affecting Chicago, the city's trades unions sponsored a speech by William T. Stead, an English editor and reformer who had been visiting and observing Chicago. Stead's criticism of the city for its corruption, civic and governmental failure, and its callous treatment of the poor and unemployed struck a responsive chord in his audience of businessmen, professionals, social workers, labor leaders and prominent Chicago women already alarmed by municipal problems and growing animosity between business and labor.¹⁶ Following Stead's speech, several of these people formed the Civic Federation and declared its aims to be honest economical government, tax reform, harmony between classes, and amelioration of social ills. These ideals gave the Civic Federation a somewhat broader and more moralistic purpose and tone

¹⁵ Samuel E. Sparling, Municipal History and Present Organization of the City of Chicago (Madison, 1898), p. 62-65.

¹⁶ Addams, p. 122.

than the Citizens' Association, at least for awhile. Despite its rhetoric about uniting classes however, the Federation's leadership was heavily middle and upper-class: Lyman Gage, president of the First National Bank, served as the first president and its vice-president was Mrs. Potter Palmer, wife of one of the city's business magnates. The members' desire for economical government quickly surpassed the other ideals.

The Pullman Strike of 1894 decisively changed the Federation's thrust and exposed the weak ties between the classes. When the organization failed to secure arbitration of the worker's grievances, and the strike was then crushed with the approval and encouragement of many Chicagoans, labor withdrew from the Federation, again feeling embittered and certain that it could never rely on the good will or methods of others in the community. Subsequently the Federation concentrated on stemming civic corruption by closing gambling houses, promoting civil service among municipal employees, and working to eliminate bribery in the awarding of city contracts. Most importantly, the Federation began to seek legislation regulating the assessment, collection, and use of tax monies.

One problem which neither the Citizens' Association nor the Civic Federation had attacked effectively was the actual membership of the City Council. The affairs of both organizations were too diffuse to allow them to concentrate on any one issue and besides, they were investigative organizations that did not directly enter politics. Following the Ogden Gas scandal and various other franchise-grabbing schemes, however, several citizens decided in 1896 that the Council had to be purged. What was needed to accomplish this, they thought, was a new organization

which would participate in the electoral process. To this end they began the Municipal Voters League.

Unlike the Citizens' Association and Civic Federation the Municipal Voters League espoused only one cause: to reform the sixty-eight member City Council, of whom it was said at the time "there were only six who were suspected of being honest."¹⁷ To do this the League abandoned the old approach of investigating those already in office in favor of examining the past records and promises of aldermanic candidates and recommending good candidates to the voters. The League gave its stamp of approval to candidates of either party who pledged to seek fair compensation for the city for all public utility franchises and promote municipal efficiency in general. It also emphasized ward issues when promoting new candidates by asking voters to consider whether the old alderman was keeping the streets clean, seeing that the garbage was collected, and other matters of immediate interest. Finally the League tried to back candidates it believed were popular enough in the ward to get elected.¹⁸

Half of the city's aldermen stood for election every year and over the next four years two-thirds of the candidates approved by the League won City Council seats. The League was most successful in the "silk-stocking" and newly annexed middle-class wards on the periphery of the city, and least successful in the old slum wards where it often found no acceptable candidates to back. But over half of the League's

¹⁷Merriam, Chicago, p. 105.

¹⁸Michael McCarthy, "The New Metropolis: Chicago, the Annexation Movement and Progressive Reform," in Michael Ebner and Eugene Tobin, eds., The Age of Urban Reform (Port Washington: Kennikat, 1977), p. 50.

candidates were elected from the city's old wards, enough to indicate a general dissatisfaction with the City Council.¹⁹

The Municipal Voters League crusades set the tone for future political reform in Chicago. The "cleaned-up" Council ceased to be the target of reformers, who turned their attention to other problems troubling the city. The success of the campaign against corruption gave them every cause for optimism in new endeavors. The reformed Council vindicated the League's belief that if issues and candidates were presented to the voters in a rational and intelligent manner, the voters would respond with equal intelligence and reason. The League, as well as other reformers, would assume in the future that reasonable men would share their views on reform issues.

One more important reform organization was formed in 1903 by several members of the Municipal Voters League who wanted to expand their more active political approach to other reform efforts. The City Club of Chicago was established by these men to provide a forum for discussing urban topics and problems and attracting new men to help implement their plans for continuing to investigate and improve municipal conditions. Membership in the City Club was by invitation of a Board of Directors and "confined to those who are sincerely interested in practical methods of improving public conditions."²⁰ Two years later the Club organized itself into civic committees to systematically and continuously appraise all aspects of Chicago affairs and also began issuing a weekly Bulletin.

¹⁹McCarthy, "Businessmen and Professionals," p. 29-33.

²⁰Walter L. Fisher to Messrs. Marx and Door, November 16, 1903, Walter L. Fisher Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Members of the Citizens' Association, Civic Federation, Municipal Voters League, and City Club were among the most visible and "respectable" business and professional men in the city. They believed that municipal waste, corruption, and inefficiency resulted largely from Chicago's outmoded, patchwork government. Other less prominent, less wealthy professional men believed that the cause of municipal problems lay elsewhere and formed their own reform organizations to pursue other solutions. Many of these men belonged to the Chicago branch of the Independence League, a national reform coalition headed by publisher William Randolph Hearst. Hearst and the Independence League believed, along with many other Americans, that these municipal problems stemmed from a "corrupt bargain" between the two political parties and the big trusts and corporations which gave privileges to special interests at the expense of the majority of the people. Because of this bargain, the League argued, the corporations and the rich never paid their fair share of taxes and the city lost millions of dollars in desperately needed revenues which could otherwise have been used to provide and upgrade municipal services. The League thus advocated a complete revision of municipal tax systems to compel the wealthy and powerful to pay their taxes.

The members of the Independence League and the civic reform organizations differed in other ways also. Although the former were primarily lawyers, these men had neither the prestige nor the wealth of those lawyers leading the civic reformers. And while most of the members of the Independence League who professed a political allegiance listed themselves as Democrats, the majority of the reformers were Republicans.²¹

²¹Chicago American, June 7 and July 14, 1907; A.N. Marquis, The Book of Chicagoans: A Biographical Dictionary of Leading Men of the City of Chicago (Chicago: Marquis and Company, 1905 and 1911).

Those who joined the Independence League were also more likely to sympathize with third party movements; Howard S. Taylor and John J. Donohue, two of the League's important spokesmen, had belonged to the Populist and People's parties respectively.

Other influential men in Chicago did not agree completely with the ideas of any of these established groups and they proposed different solutions which attracted a certain following within the city. Louis Post and Raymond Robins were two of the most important of these men; although both men belonged to the City Club they often found themselves at odds with their fellow members. Post was a lawyer and newspaper editor who, like the Independence League, believed that unfair tax laws perpetuated municipal problems. His solution though was the single tax proposed by Henry George in 1879. According to disciples of George only a single tax on the unearned increment from land value could bring political, social, and economic democracy to the country and its cities. Louis Post was able to project this philosophy into municipal affairs. In the case of public utilities, for instance, Post believed that since all land belonged by right to all of the people municipal ownership of utilities was essential. The prevailing system of "ownership by private moneygrubbing corporations", he argued, deprived the people of their right to the city streets and assured that there would never be adequate municipal services.²²

Sociologist and social worker Raymond Robins wanted to make the municipal government more responsible for the general welfare of the

²²Louis F. Post, "Living a Long Life Over," unpublished autobiography in Louis F. Post Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., p. 270-72.

majority of its citizens, particularly the poor. The existing municipal government, he believed, functioned for the benefit of the wealthy and the politicians and these groups had failed to provide a decent life for many Chicagoans. His solution was to change the municipal structure and laws to give the people a more direct voice in all municipal affairs.

Clearly then, Chicago in the 1890s was experiencing the severe municipal problems and the lack of agreement over how to solve them and for what purposes which historians now see as characteristic of urban progressivism.²³ And as the new century got under way more groups of citizens with other priorities for reform organized and demanded a voice in any reform process.

II

Various groups of Chicagoans confronted each other in a number of important reform issues which emerged at the end of the century. One of the most controversial of these issues was how to administer the public schools. The condition of the schools attracted the attention of most of the residents not only because their children attended, but also because the system was a major recipient of property tax revenues. Under the prevailing system a Board of Education appointed by the Mayor and a Superintendent selected by the Board ran the schools, technically free of any outside control. Many residents objected to this situation but for widely disparate reasons. Businessmen worried about how the schools spent their tax dollars; many of them argued that the school system was fiscally wasteful because the Board was appointed by a poli-

²³For a brief overview of the status of this issue see Michael H. Foner and Eugene M. Tobin, The Age of Urban Reform: New Perspectives on The Progressive Era (Port Washington: Kennikat, 1977), p. 3-12.

tician and hence was subject to political pressure. Led by the Commercial and Merchants' Clubs these men wanted to diminish the Board's powers and transfer most authority to the Superintendent, who they hoped would then administer the schools in a more business-like fashion--that is, with more efficiency and economy.²⁴

In contrast, the Teachers' Federation, Federation of Labor, and many parents and private citizens wanted to make the school system more democratic and directly accountable to the public. Rather than shifting power to the Superintendent they sought to elect the school board members, give teachers a greater voice in planning curriculum and deciding school policies, and to have the system place more emphasis on education than on fiscal expertise and economy.²⁵ The antagonism between the businessmen and these other groups was heightened by the former's advocacy of a dual school system: the regular schools and industrial training schools. The CFL suspected that business wanted to use industrial schools both to train apprentices to oppose unions and to assign poor children automatically to an education designed to limit their opportunities for the future.

Any reform of the public schools clearly concerned how much influence and control the broad community would have in municipal affairs; this was also true of the public utilities problem. Following the Yerkes and Allen Bill scandals of the late 1890s, labor, radical reformers and socialists in the city began demanding complete and immediate municipal ownership

²⁴Merriam, Chicago, p. 126-30.

²⁵Addams, p. 233-34; CFL, Minutes, December 2, 1906; Post, "Living a Long Life Over," p. 315; Wheeler and Wortman, p. 87-89. In a public policy (non-binding) referendum conducted in April 1904, two-thirds of those voting favored an elected school board. Chicago Daily News, Almanac (1905), p. 357.

of the utilities as the only way out of the franchise mess. While most of the business community decried this insidious attack on the free enterprise system, many politicians and moderate civic reformers agreed that some significant reform was needed and they looked for a less drastic solution than complete municipal ownership. Hardly anyone in the city did not have an opinion about the public utilities problem; the issue was so volatile that it determined the outcome of the 1903 and 1905 mayoral elections.

The problem was quite urgent in 1903 for existing franchises would soon expire and a bill to allow cities to own and operate public transit systems was stalled in the state legislature. Mayor Harrison and his Republican challenger both endorsed the bill, but only Harrison promised to veto any franchise extensions granted by the City Council before the law could be enacted. On the strength of this pledge Harrison was re-elected and the month after the election the legislature passed the Mueller Law empowering cities to build or buy and operate street car lines.

To the dismay of the advocates of municipal ownership, however, the Mueller Law touched off a series of political machinations which threatened to impede their goal. First of all, Harrison and other influential men had wanted the Mueller Law simply to use as a club to force existing transit companies to renegotiate franchises more agreeable to the city.²⁶ The mayor authorized the City Council Committee on Transportation to begin such negotiations even before the voters had a chance to accept or reject the Mueller Law by public referendum. The proponents of municipal

²⁶Komons, p. 296.

ownership knew they could obtain the three-fifths majority needed to ratify the Law and they attempted to counter the mayor's actions by pushing for an early referendum which would place not only the Mueller Law before the voters but also two pertinent public policy questions. As expected the voters overwhelmingly ratified all three measures. The public policy questions urged the city to proceed immediately in acquiring street railways and requested the Council to refrain from granting franchises during this process and instead license existing street railways and compel them to provide satisfactory service.²⁷

Despite this evidence of the public's sympathies, critics of municipal ownership continued to seek a more moderate solution, protesting that it was neither financially nor legally feasible for the city to own and operate its own transit system. The Mueller Act had, in fact, thrown its own roadblock in the path of municipal ownership. It stipulated that cities could finance transit systems either by issuing municipal bonds or street car certificates to be paid from the revenues realized from the transit lines. Opponents seized upon this clause and argued that the first method was impossible because the city had reached its allowable level of indebtedness, and that it was also highly unlikely that the city could raise enough money by the latter method. In addition the traction companies threatened to test the Mueller Law in court, and the Union Traction Company was in federal receivership and thus removed from any municipal control until the government had untangled its financial arrangements.

Backed by the opponents of municipal ownership Harrison remained

²⁷Daily News, Almanac (1905), p. 357. Public policy questions were non-binding referenda.

firm in his intention to secure new franchises from the transit companies. In the late summer of 1904 he supported a settlement agreed upon by the Committee on Transportation and the City Railway Company in which, Harrison contended, the company accepted in principle universal transfers, the five-cent fare, and paying adequate compensation to the city. He then refused to submit the Tentative Ordinance, as it was called, or any other franchise ordinance to popular referendum.²⁸ In response the enraged supporters of municipal ownership secured pledges from a majority of the City Council not to pass any franchise ordinance that did not contain a referendum clause, and prepared to place the transit question on the ballot once again at the April 1905 election.

Harrison subsequently declined to run for another term and the Democrats nominated Edward F. Dunne who promised to implement immediate municipal ownership; his Republican opponent John Harlan refused to support municipal ownership. Dunne won the election on the strength of his pledge and the voters once again showed their preferences on the transit issue. They decisively rejected the Tentative Ordinance and approved measures demanding that the Council not grant any new franchise to the City Railway or any other traction company.²⁹

But the issue was far from settled. Despite his pledge Dunne appointed Walter Fisher, a noted civic reformer and moderate on municipal ownership question, as his advisor on traction. Fisher proceeded to pursue a moderate course and the controversy over the appropriate way to regulate public utilities continued to divide the city.

²⁸Harrison, p. 246.

²⁹Daily News, Almanac (1906), p. 292.

Yet perhaps no issue caused more popular uproar in Chicago than liquor regulation, and this issue had the additional consequence of causing the city's ethnic groups to become involved intensely in municipal affairs. As temperance forces in the city and throughout the state grew more ardent in their quest, ethnic Chicagoans united to fight what they correctly perceived as a direct assault on their lifestyle. Once they were unified in this common cause it was only a short step for them to shift their efforts from a negative stance--that of opposing prohibition--to the more positive one of actively deciding what kind of city they wanted and then pursuing their ideas and objectives.

By the end of the century ethnic groups had already been alarmed by the increasing political strength of groups such as the Hyde Park Protective Association, and the Law and Order and Anti-Saloon Leagues. For awhile prohibition efforts had been centered in the outlying township districts. When these townships were annexed in 1889 the prohibitionists secured a guarantee for continuing these township prohibition districts in return for their supporting annexation. Thus when Hyde Park was annexed eleven of its forty-eight square miles were dry and the remainder subject to local option. However the Columbian Exposition of 1893 occasioned a reversal of this agreement and helped upset whatever delicate balance there had been between the residents of the dry townships and the wet city. Finding it unthinkable that the Exposition, located in Hyde Park, should not be able to sell liquor, the Board of Directors secured a temporary liquor license. The dries believed this was simply a first step toward erasing the earlier agreement entirely and began working to extend dry and local option areas into Chicago

In the first years of the twentieth century, temperance forces stepped up their activities by trying to compel both the city and the state to regulate more stringently the sale of liquor in the city.³⁰ The Anti-Saloon and Law and Order Leagues demanded that the City Council enforce the state laws regulating all places serving liquor and particularly that it close saloons on Sunday. Although the Cities and Villages Act of 1872 gave city councils power to license, regulate, and prohibit the sale of liquor, the Leagues contended that local legislatures had to stay within bounds of state laws when exercising these powers. Knowing that Sunday closings would be very unpopular in Chicago, in March 1906 the City Council instead attempted to placate the Leagues by raising the saloon license fee from \$500 to \$1000, claiming this would force disreputable saloons out of business while providing additional revenues for the city. State's Attorney John Healy then threatened to impeach Mayor Dunne if he did not enforce the state law requiring all places serving liquor to close at 1:00 A.M. At the Mayor's behest the Council voted to stop issuing the special bar permits which allowed clubs and dance halls to serve liquor after 1:00 A.M.

A few days later more than 30,000 people representing many of the city's ethnic groups gathered in a mass meeting to protest this infringement of their social and leisure activities. Addressing the crowd in several languages speakers accused the City Council of constricting "personal liberty" and the right of everyone to choose his or her own form of recreation. They blamed the Council's actions on a small but

³⁰ John Clayton, "The Scourge of Sinners: Arthur Burrage Farwell," Chicago History (Fall 1974), p. 69-71; Chicago Record-Herald, February and March, 1906, *passim*.

vocal group of prohibitionists who were conspiring with temperance groups throughout the state to force prohibition on Chicago. The cheering crowd resolved to organize a society to remove systematically all laws by which "bigots attempt to subjugate the majority," by securing complete home rule for Chicago from the state legislature.³¹ The results of this meeting were dramatic: the City Council rescinded its order and agreed to continue issuing the special bar permits.

The size, enthusiasm, and success of this meeting impressed the publishers of the German language press. They placed ads in the city's ethnic newspapers inviting ethnic societies to send delegates to a convention for organizing a permanent group dedicated to protecting and promoting their common interests.³² On May 27, 1906 nearly 350 ethnic societies representing 60,000 people sent delegates to this meeting where they organized the United Societies for Local Self-Government.³³ Thus using their well-established community organizations—newspapers and benevolent and fraternal societies—Chicago's ethnic groups were able to launch the largest interethnic group of the Progressive Era with relative ease.

The United Societies encompassed men from most ethnic and class groups in the city. Despite German predominance the organization attempted to represent directly all members by selecting a large governing body of nine officers and fifty-eight executive committee members from every ethnic group.³⁴ Two Germans, a Pole, a Bohemian, and a Croatian

³¹Abendpost, March 26, 1906.

³²For an example see L'Italia, May 26, 1906.

³³See Appendix II for a list of these societies.

³⁴See Appendix III.

were vice-presidents; the secretary and treasurer were German; and a Hungarian served as financial secretary. Of fifty-five identifiable executive committee members, twenty-nine were German, nine Bohemian, six Polish, four Swedish, two Swiss, and one each Italian, Irish, Danish, Belgian, and Croatian. In the subsequent annual conventions each nationality was to have one vote per its first 200 or fewer members with an additional vote for each additional 200 members. By occupation half these men were workers--machinists, tailors, clerks, laborers, and craftsmen of all kinds. There was one doctor, eight lawyers, three newspapermen, and eight small businessmen. Not surprisingly ten were saloonkeepers and three were in the liquor business, although these men were no more visible than anyone else.³⁵

One group was conspicuously absent: the Irish. Having already made significant inroads into the regular political system perhaps they did not feel the need for ethnic solidarity to achieve their goals;³⁶ perhaps too the other groups resented their political power and balked at including them. Whatever the reason the Irish did not formally send delegates to the convention, but the United Societies did ask two Irishmen to occupy important posts in the organization. Charles Gilbert, a lawyer, was the Societies' first president, and former Congressman Edward Noonan who did attend the founding convention, acted as the Societies' lawyer. Since no mention of Gilbert's selection appears in

³⁵The nationalities and occupations of these men were compiled from Abendpost, May 28, 1906; Chicago, City Directory (1906 and 1907); the United Societies for Local Self-Government, Constitution and By-Laws (1906).

³⁶Edward Dunne was elected Mayor in 1905; Roger Sullivan led one of the factions in the Democratic party; and a number of Irish sat in the City Council and occupied prominent positions in the Democratic Party.

the convention accounts it is impossible to say for certain why he was chosen, although Alex Gottfried in his biography of Anton Cerman (permanent secretary of the Societies after 1907) speculated that the Societies believed it "impolitic" to have a foreign name heading the organization.³⁷

The size (reputedly 1000 societies representing 250,000 people by 1919) made the United Societies probably the largest interethnic group of its time; its political activities made it an important force in Chicago in the Progressive Era. At first glance the ideas and actions of the United Societies do resemble the ritualistic ethnocultural orientation of "personal liberty" as described by Paul Kleppner in his study of late nineteenth century midwestern voting patterns. To Kleppner "personal liberty" was the slogan utilized by ritualistic ethnic groups opposed to "government whose regulatory powers are used to establish canons of social norms," and advocating government "whose presence could be seen but not felt."³⁸ Hence for Kleppner and others who have followed his lead, ethnic opposition to prohibition stemmed from a religious antipathy toward government attempting to legislate morality. While the Societies indeed opposed prohibition, and sometimes used the slogan "personal liberty", it is shortsighted to categorize the Societies simply as an anti-prohibition group in this mold. Their motives were neither as culturally static nor politically limited as the ethnoculturists and others who study Chicago history suggest, and to apply this inter-

³⁷Gottfried, p. 53-54. Gottfried cites no source for this information. There is no mention of Gilbert, for instance, in the Abendpost, May 28, 1906 account of the meeting although the names of all the other officers and executive committee members are given.

³⁸Paul Kleppner, The Cross of Culture: A Social Analysis of Midwestern Politics, 1850-1900 (New York: The Free Press, 1970), p. 169 and 178.

pretation to the United Societies without carefully examining what the organization was saying and doing underestimates the impact of the Progressive Era on all urban residents and misses the opportunity to examine Chicago's ethnic groups as a vital part of their community and the processes which decided municipal policies.³⁹

The foremost task of the delegates to the Societies' founding convention was to adopt a statement of the purposes and principles of the organization, and the discussion over this issue does not reveal a culturally-based concern for seeking a severely limited government. Rather, the speakers presented their ideas as consistent with the highly secular and "American" principles of democracy, majority rule, and respect for the law. Fritz Glogauer, editor of the Abendpost, castigated temperance laws as undemocratic, the "unreasonable and coercive regulation" resulting from the "agitation of a tiny, but arrogant minority," and reminded his audience that energetic resistance was "the proper think in a democratic republic where the majority rules, not the minority; where the dog waves the tail and not vice versa."⁴⁰ One speaker proclaimed that he was just as good an American as anyone else and therefore entitled to an equal voice in determining laws and government, while still others expressed concern for the general esteem for law when one group tries to enforce offensive laws upon the rest of society. Speakers

³⁹For previous treatments of the United Societies see John Allswang, A House for All Peoples: Ethnic Politics in Chicago, 1890-1936 (Lexington: University of Kentucky, 1971); John Buerker, "The Dynamics of Chicago Ethnic Politics, 1900-1930," Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society 67 (April 1974); Gottfried, Boss Cermak; Edward Kantowicz, Polish-American Politics in Chicago, 1888-1940 (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1975); McCarthy, "Businessmen and Professionals."

⁴⁰Abendpost, May 28, 1906.

furthermore stressed not freedom from government, but freedom of self-government--an important distinction--demanding that the citizens of Chicago, as well as other local communities, be allowed to govern themselves independent of interference from the rural elements of the state.

The convention issued a Declaration of Purposes and Principles reflecting these ideas. The organization's operating principles were based on the belief that "in a democratic republic the laws should conform to the views and wishes of the broad citizenry as well as the actual social conditions," and that "obsolete and neglected restrictive laws stand in contradiction with popular government." The Societies vowed to work for local self-government because "as city life differs from rural life, so should laws which regulate social customs distinguish between city and country life."⁴¹

In establishing the United Societies, Chicago's ethnic groups declared themselves legitimate members of their city and served notice on their fellow citizens that their needs and wishes could not be ignored. As businessmen, labor, women, reformers, and others had formed organizations to promote the interests they had in shaping their community so too did the ethnic groups. The Societies gave them a vehicle through which to articulate their concerns and desires and become involved more actively in municipal affairs. Most importantly, it also succeeded in uniting the disparate and sometimes antagonistic nationality groups in the realization that they had certain interests in common; without unity they risked remaining weak and ineffectual with each group scrambling to better its individual situation, but unified into the Societies they learned to

⁴¹Ibid.

exercise the power to which they were entitled by their sheer numbers.

All the groups trying to decide what to do about schools, public utilities, prohibition, woman suffrage, municipal corruption, and the myriad other problems facing Chicago had come to realize one important factor--that the solutions would depend greatly on who had the power of decision-making. While some Chicagoans would work to keep that power strictly limited, others pushed to broaden popular participation in government by means of the initiative and referendum. In 1902 the voters approved a public policy proposition that local citizens be able to initiate legislation with signatures of eight percent of the eligible voters, and to demand a referendum vote on local legislation by petition of five percent. Two years later they reinforced these earlier votes by supporting a proposal that voters be empowered to veto any undesirable action of their respective law-making bodies whenever five percent of the voters petitioned to have such action referred to popular vote.⁴² Because public policy questions were simply straw votes the results did not actuate these changes, but they did reflect the prevailing sentiment of the city that the voters should have a greater say in municipal affairs.

Thus by the first years of the new century significant numbers of Chicagoans had organized to identify and confront a multitude of municipal problems. They had eliminated some corruption by cleaning up the City Council and they were anxious for more change. It remained to be seen how, or if, they could reconcile their conflicting desires and effectuate reforms which were acceptable to at least the majority.

⁴²Daily News, Almanac (1905), p. 356.

CHAPTER IV

THE BEGINNINGS OF CHARTER REFORM

By the turn of the century, a number of prominent men in the city had begun to perceive that the piecemeal approach to reform stood little chance of success. Not only did this approach allow every issue to bog down in squabbling among different groups of people, it also failed to get to the heart of the matter—that the city could no longer function under the restrictions of the state incorporation act. In 1902 therefore, several politicians and civic reformers proposed that Chicago write a home rule charter. Such a charter, as they conceived it, would simultaneously empower the city to administer purely local affairs without state interference and allow the city to alter dramatically its governing structure.

The idea of writing a new municipal charter was inspired by the city's antiquated revenue system, which made it difficult for Chicago either to meet its existing financial obligations or fund new municipal works. The system of multiple taxing bodies, each with its fixed tax levy, prevented the city from raising additional income from property taxes or from distributing the collected property tax revenue according to need. Moreover, the city had reached the legal limit on bonded indebtedness and could not issue any new bonds. To meet its financial obligations Chicago relied heavily on special assessments and license taxes. According to the Cities and Villages Act municipalities could

finance local improvements through a special tax on continuous property (e.g. that property fronting a street being repaved).¹ Chicago property owners were protesting this dual tax burden and demanding relief, particularly since the city habitually over-assessed for the improvements and failed to refund adequately the monies as required by law. The incorporation act also gave cities broad licensing powers and the City Council steadily increased license fees and created new licenses to help offset financial difficulties. This was a practice to which small businessmen in particular objected.²

Proposals to revamp the city's governing and taxing structures had been advanced from time to time. As early as 1884 the Citizens' Association had recommended a series of constitutional amendments to accomplish this. Since there was a constitutional ban against the legislature considering more than one amendment a session, this proposal met with little enthusiasm. In 1899 the Greater Chicago Committee, a group of businessmen, wanted to draft a single amendment which would extend the city limits to include all of Cook County and subsume all functions of the county government under the city. This suggestion also failed to attract support. However, the prospect of consolidation appealed to many people and in 1901 Mayor Harrison asked the City Council to recommend constitutional amendments which would enable the city to consolidate all existing taxing bodies under the municipal government.³ It was Harrison's intention then to call a constitutional convention to con-

¹Illinois, Constitution (1870), article 9.

²Merriam, Municipal Revenues, p. 14; Pierce, vol. 3, p. 336-37.

³Philip, p. 166-67; Chicago, Journal of the Proceedings of the City Council, Meeting of October 14, 1901, p.

sider the recommended amendments.

Members of the Civic Federation however had already decided to reject this approach as too limited. They were among the growing number of people throughout the country who believed that the existing legal relationship between cities and states was inefficient and increasingly harmful to cities. This point of view was summarized in the late nineteenth century by one of the many reformers studying and writing on this problem.⁴ Our large cities, wrote Ellis Oberholtzer,

are totally diverse from the interests of the remaining sections of the States in which they are placed by our artificial arrangement of boundaries. We have massed different people together who have no mutual sympathies, who are opposites in political and social standards and antipodal in wants and government requirements....For the good of the cities themselves, and likewise for the good of the States, it is necessary that our large cities should be free cities.

The solution suggested by Oberholtzer and other urban reformers was municipal home rule.

The Chicago Civic Federation eagerly adopted the idea of home rule. In 1897 it pledged to work "until full control over all legislation affecting local interests is removed from the State Capitol to the city of Chicago" and began its own campaign to free the city from the Cities and Villages Act and write a new municipal charter.⁵ When others in the city agreed that extensive local self-government was the best solution Mayor Harrison adopted this approach also and suggested that the Council take appropriate steps to ensure that the "legally authorized representatives of Chicago and the County" took the lead in

⁴Ellis P. Oberholtzer, "Home Rule for Our American Cities," The Annals 3 (1892-1893), p. 763.

⁵Chicago Tribune, May 4, 1897.

this matter rather than allowing citizens' groups to do so.⁶ But the Civic Federation had already acted. It issued a report advocating a new city charter which would consolidate overlapping governing bodies, extend the debt limit, reform the structure and powers of the City Council, and in general make it easier for the city to expand governmentally and geographically.⁷ Within a month the Federation took the further initiative of inviting "influential" groups to send delegates to a convention to discuss these issues and recommend a course of action.

On October 28, 1902 seventy-four men from business and social clubs, civic organizations, political groups, and delegates-at-large assembled as the Chicago New Charter Convention. The Tribune, a vigorous supporter of the proceedings, described the convention as "a really representative body. There is no prominent organization, municipal, individual, or political which will not be represented."⁸ The overwhelming majority of these men however, were successful businessmen and professionals; the CFL sent two delegates and except for three men from Jewish business clubs the city's ethnic groups were unrepresented.⁹

The Civic Federation believed that the convention had two main tasks. The first was to decide whether to seek a new state constitution, or whether to write a constitutional amendment which would allow Chicago to draft a new charter. Assuming they chose the latter, the second

⁶Chicago, Journal of the City Council, September 29, 1902, p. 1104.

⁷Chicago Civic Federation, "Preliminary Report on the Need for a New City Charter," Chicago Civic Federation Papers, Box no. 3

⁸Tribune, October 28, 1902.

⁹List of Delegates, in Civic Federation Papers, Box no. 3.

task was to decide if this constitutional amendment should be simply a general grant of power to Chicago to write a charter or whether it should specify the exact municipal powers the city wanted to include in the charter. The Tribune was as confident of a general consensus about charter reform as it was of the convention's representativeness. While acknowledging the existence of differing opinions, the paper called upon the minority to surrender gracefully to the majority because a new charter involved "policy and not principle" and hence no opposition was legitimate.¹⁰

Opening the convention, B.E. Sunny, president of the Civic Federation, reminded the delegates that forces outside of Chicago controlled the legislature by a margin of two to one. These men, Sunny told the convention, did not want a new constitution, but they were also not happy about the continuous stream of amendments brought before the legislature by Chicago--there were in fact twenty-three such amendments currently pending in Springfield. This being the case, a new municipal charter seemed the only remedy. The delegates agreed and appointed a committee to draft an "enabling" amendment which would allow Chicago to write a new charter.¹¹

The amendment which the committee drafted included three broad proposals. First that the legislature henceforth be allowed to provide a scheme or charter of local government for Chicago; second that such a scheme provide for consolidating in the municipal government the powers currently vested in the county, city, board of education, library board,

¹⁰Tribune, October 28, 1902.

¹¹Chicago New Charter Convention, Proceedings, October 28, 1902.

townships, park and sanitary districts (exactly what the Civic Federation has proposed); and third that once the city had consolidated with two of these bodies it would assume the debts and liabilities of such bodies and would henceforth be allowed to become indebted to an aggregate amount not to exceed five percent of the full value of taxable property within its limits. Under this scheme the city's debt limit thus would jump from one percent to five percent, and it would control the tax levies from the entire tax district instead of being restricted to its current two percent of assessed property valuation.¹²

When the committee reported its proposed amendment back to the full convention the delegates split decisively over its content. The majority favored the amendment as written because it satisfied their primary concern about revenue. James Linehan, however, a delegate from the CFL, was not satisfied. He objected that the amendment was too general because it neither specified who would write the charter nor enumerated what municipal powers were to be included in it. He feared particularly that if the state legislators drafted a charter they would ignore substantially the desires of most Chicagoans as the CFL saw them. Linehan warned the CFL might refuse to support any amendment which "ignored the will of the people and failed to include a clause endorsing initiative, referendum, and municipal ownership."¹³ He accused the delegates of duplicity in refusing to consider these issues while clearly spelling out the taxation powers they wanted in the charter. Although Linehan received support from Edward Dunne and other delegates in favor of a

¹²See above, Chapter II, p. 35-36.

¹³New Charter Convention, Proceedings, December 18, 1902.

more democratic government, the convention rejected a proposal specifically to authorize municipal ownership in the amendment and adopted it as drafted by the committee.

Linehan's expressed fear of the state legislature and his objections to the amendment foreshadowed the conflicts which would plague the charter movement for the next five years. At the time though, the supporters of the amendment sent it to the legislature confident of its passage and a future new charter. They soon experienced their first setback. Although the legislature generally favored a Chicago charter as a means of relief from the burden of local legislation, many legislators wanted the reform accomplished on their terms and not Chicago's.¹⁴ Downstate legislators, representing what they called the "country element" attempted to exchange the amendment for new state tax laws desired by downstate and for permanent limit on the number of Chicago and Cook County representatives. One of the leaders of this move admitted that "we are using this question as a club if you like."¹⁵ This tactic failed but it certainly gave Chicago every reason to fear similar tactics in the future, quite conceivably over the charter itself. And the legislature did make a substantive change in the enabling amendment. It limited consolidation to the City, Board of Education, library board, townships, and park districts; the County and Sanitary District were to remain separate governing and taxing bodies.¹⁶

¹⁴ Philip, p. 170-72.

¹⁵ Record-Herald, April 23, 1903.

¹⁶ Illinois, House Journal, March 24, 1903, p. 386, and April 22, 1903, p. 795. The amendment became article 4, section 34 of the Illinois Constitution (1870).

Although the revisions disappointed the proponents of charter reform, they accepted this form of the amendment as the best they could hope to get and began preparations for submitting it to a referendum of all Illinois voters. They were particularly anxious to obtain a huge affirmative vote in Chicago to offset possible negative voting elsewhere in the state. With the referendum scheduled for November 1904, Mayor Harrison and the City Council tried once again to bring the entire issue under control of the city government. The Council authorized Harrison to appoint a special Council Committee to be known as the Chicago Charter Amendment Campaign Committee with power to take whatever steps it deemed necessary to promote adoption of the amendment. The Committee was authorized to invite the cooperation of civic organizations and perhaps form an auxiliary committee of citizens to assist in educating Chicago voters on behalf of the amendment.¹⁷ But the Civic Federation refused to relinquish its prominent role in charter reform; it cooperated with the City Council committee but continued to work on its own also. Through its own New Charter Campaign Committee the Federation disseminated literature throughout the city urging voters to ratify the amendment because Chicago desperately needed to be free of the Cities and Villages Act.¹⁸

Chicagoans were not unanimous in their support for the amendment. The CFL, for example, hesitated to recommend that its membership vote for it. Ratification of the Mueller Law in April 1904 defused some-

¹⁷Chicago, Journal of the City Council, January 25, 1904, p. 2111-12, February 1, 1904, p. 2125, and November 21, 1904, p. 1592-94.

¹⁸Chicago New Charter Movement, "Why the Pending Constitutional Amendment Should Be Adopted" (1904), unpublished pamphlet, Chicago Historical Society.

what labor's dissatisfaction with the amendment's failure to ensure municipal ownership, but the CFL still objected to the amendment's emphasis on taxation, its failure to ensure other popular reforms, and its vague wording which specified neither who would write the new charter nor how much home rule Chicago would be granted. When the Civic Federation secured permission from the Board of Education to distribute pro-charter information in the schools, the CFL believed that its worst suspicions about who would benefit from charter reform in its proposed format had been confirmed. It demanded equal opportunity to publicize its views and to hand out literature supporting the public policy questions on direct primary, popular veto, and local power to assess and levy taxes which would also be on the referendum ballot.¹⁹ Rather than prolong the controversy the Board of Education rescinded its permission to the Civic Federation.

Four days before the referendum, labor urged its membership to reject the amendment because it was an attempt by certain groups—"every corporate agent, every subsidized newspaper, and every lick-spittle syncophant"—to gain control of the city.²⁰ Indeed, many of the largest merchants and manufacturers had "lent" employees to help the campaign committee during the final days of the campaign.²¹ The CFL proposed that to undercut these groups a constitutional convention be convened to write a new state constitution. Louis Post, an acknowledged leader of the city's liberal independents, took the same position. In his

¹⁹CFL, Minutes, October 16, 1904.

²⁰Ibid., November 4, 1904.

²¹Tribune, November 8, 1904.

newspaper Post argued that certain financial interests supported the amendment because they knew that any constitutional convention would include groups antagonistic to their desires. Both Post and the CFL believed that only in a constitutional convention would a broad segment of the community have a voice in how Chicago would be reformed.²²

These arguments failed to impress the majority of Chicago voters who ratified the amendment by more than ten to one. A majority of voters in the state, most likely heeding their representatives' explanation that it would free the legislature from continual Chicago legislation, also passed the amendment. The outcome of the referendum showed that most Chicagoans agreed with the need for municipal reform but not necessarily about the shape of that reform. And in fact the voting on three public policy questions which had shared the ballot indicated that the majority favored more extensive home rule and popular decision-making than the amendment's principal backers had suggested. By a majority of ten to one the voters approved the proposition that citizens should be able to veto any undesirable action of their local government, and they favored by over three to one the idea that local governments should be empowered to adopt their own system of assessing and levying taxes subject to popular referendum. The voters also gave their overwhelming support to the proposition of instituting direct primaries for nominating candidates for office.²³

The next step toward charter reform was to constitute a body to draft a charter. Since the enabling amendment provided no mechanism

²²CFL, Minutes, November 4, 1904; the Public, November 5, 1904.

²³Daily News, Almanac (1905), p. 356.

for deciding this matter several interested groups offered their own proposals. Everyone realized that the finished product would reflect the sentiments of those who drafted it on home rule, taxation, election reform, schools, municipal ownership, and other troubling issues.

The CFL's suspicion that certain business interests intended to dominate charter reform was soon confirmed by events. In late November the extant executive committee of the 1902 convention, acting as though they had priority in this matter, named a committee of seven to draft the new charter and authorized them to seek "such assistance as might be helpful."²⁴ Three of these men, John P. Wilson, Judge Francis Adams and John S. Miller, were in fact members of the executive committee; all three were lawyers and Miller was special corporation counsel for the Union Traction Company, one of the franchises currently engaged in resisting municipal ownership. The other four were Bernard E. Sunny, president of the Civic Federation, Mayor Harrison, Judge Murray Tuley, and B.A. Eckhart, a prominent manufacturer who had represented the Board of Trade at the convention two years earlier.²⁵ Furthermore, Sunny, Miller, Wilson, and Eckhart belonged to the prestigious Union League Club where Sunny was chairman of the political action committee. The Club was acutely aware of its influence to date in the charter movement and intended to remain influential. A few months earlier Merritt Starr, also a member of the political action committee, had written to Sunny boasting about the Club's activities. He pointed out that of the seventy-

²⁴Record-Herald, November 24, 1904.

²⁵Ibid., List of Delegates, in Civic Federation Papers; Marquis, The Book of Chicagoans (1905).

one living delegates of the 1902 convention thirty-two belonged to the Union League Club and declared that "it is fair to say that the Union League Club has from the beginning held a leading place in the movement for City Charter Revision, and it desires to continue active in this work..." In his letter Starr also commented that the members of the Club sought a charter "drawn on rational and scientific lines and utilizing to the utmost all of the lessons of experience and embodying no rash experiments which have no justification in experience at their back."²⁶

The convention's executive committee was not to have its way unopposed and the matter became quite complicated. The CFL immediately set out to draw up a plan for a convention to write the new charter. Responding to a resolution from the Carriage and Wagon Workers Union that fifty members of organized labor be representatives to any new charter convention, the CFL appointed a fifty member special committee to consider this question and to draw up recommendations for possible charter provisions. When five members of this committee met with the City Council Charter Committee to discuss the matter they discovered that the city's elected officials likewise opposed the plan for the committee of seven but were attempting to replace it with one of their own which would place control of the charter squarely in the Council's hands.²⁷ Moreover the state House Charter Committee was considering

²⁶ Merritt Starr to B.E. Sunny, April 14, 1905, Civic Federation Papers, Box no. 3. The Union League Club, according to its historian, "numbered a large portion of Chicago's most distinguished citizens in its membership. Bankers, merchants, capitalists, railroad managers, and officers of great corporations--the 'solid men'..." Bruce Grant, Fight for a City (Chicago: Union League Club, 1955), p. 175.

²⁷ CFL, Minutes, November 20 and December 4, 1904.

introducing its own plan for constituting a charter convention.

The CFL objected that none of these plans would provide popular participation in drafting the charter and quickly moved to formulate its own plan. It discarded the idea of demanding that a certain number of men from organized labor participate in any convention and instead proposed a large, elected charter convention of 350 delegates. According to the CFL plan all Chicago citizens were to be eligible for membership in the convention and the delegates were to be nominated by petition and elected at-large by plurality vote. The CFL thought that this method was the only way to preclude the possibility of the convention being controlled by one or two factions.²⁸

The CFL sent its proposed plan to the state Charter Committee which rejected it and in its place Representative John McGoorty (D-Chicago) introduced a bill to constitute a smaller convention of ninety elected and twenty-five appointed members. But this bill and four others failed to pass the legislature and the City Council assumed responsibility for constituting a charter convention.²⁹ In the Council Democrats and Republicans introduced separate plans for such a convention. The Republican plan called for a convention of seventy-four appointed delegates: fifteen City Council members selected by the Council; fifteen state legislators chosen by the presiding officers of each house; and fifteen appointed by the Governor and fifteen by the Mayor. To complete the convention the Board of Cook County Commissioners, Trustees of the Sanitary District, the Board of Education, Library Board, and the

²⁸Ibid., January 8, 1905.

²⁹Record-Herald, April 1 and 29, 1905; Philip, p. 173-74.

South, West, and Lincoln Park Boards were each to appoint two representatives. With the exception of Mayor Dunne and the library board, all of the appointing agents were predominantly Republican.³⁰

Not surprisingly Council Democrats accused the Republicans of designing a Republican convention to insure that certain provisions, such as municipal ownership, were not written into a new charter. Democratic alderman Joseph Kohout countered the first plan with one for appointing 110 delegates: one each appointed by every City Council member; five aldermen appointed by the Council Committee on State Legislation; and five appointed by the Governor, fifteen by the Mayor, and two each by the previously mentioned governing boards. This plan also stipulated, unlike the Republican plan, that all except the governing board appointees had to reside in Chicago. By removing the state legislature entirely from the delegate selection process and reducing the number of gubernatorial appointees the Democrats were attempting to shift the political balance and possibly reduce the number of politicians who might be convention delegates. The Republicans controlled the Council and their plan was accepted.³¹

Those men instrumental in appointing the convention were not completely unmindful of the desirability of attempting to balance somewhat the convention's membership. When Governor Deneen sent him a list of his tentative appointees Walter Fisher suggested that the Governor revise his list to include more groups within the city. Fisher commended the choice of Lessing Rosenthal because he represented the Jewish element

³⁰ Chicago, Journal of the City Council, May 15, 1905, p. 209-10.

³¹ Ibid., June 12, 1905, p. 551-52 and June 19, 1905, p. 633.

and suggested that the Governor similarly seek a "prominent" Catholic to appoint. Fisher also observed that the list overly represented the "conservative and property-owning element," and proposed appointing "some representative of the labor or radical class." On the whole though, the men on Fisher's list were predominantly Republican businessmen and civic leaders; it is indicative of his thinking that the man he suggested to represent the Germans and the liquor interests was also general counsel and director of Republic Steel and Iron and thus, as Fisher pointed out, would also represent large manufacturers.³² Fisher was most concerned, as were the other prominent figures in charter reform, that the right people be appointed to the convention and not that the convention be a popularly representative one.

Despite the efforts of some men like Fisher to be fair, the delegates appointed to the charter convention were, as the Democrats and CFL feared, neither politically non-partisan nor representative of the city's population. Certain groups were obviously overrepresented.³³ Of sixty-two delegates whose political affiliation can be identified, thirty-nine were Republican, twenty-two were Democrats, and one called himself an Independent. The City Council named ten Republicans and five Democrats, eight of Governor Deneen's appointees were Republican, and only one of the General Assembly's choices was a Democrat. Only Mayor Dunne appointed more Democrats than Republicans. The West and Lincoln

³²Walter L. Fisher to Governor Charles Deneen, September 11, 1905, Walter L. Fisher Papers.

³³The information on the delegates was compiled from Chicago Charter Convention, "Officers, List of Delegates, Rules and Committees," unpublished, Chicago Historical Society; Daily News, Almanac (1906); the Illinois Blue Book (1905); Marquis, Book of Chicagoans. See Appendix IV.

Park Boards, whose members had been appointed by Governor Deneen, chose two Republicans each for the convention, while the "Democratic" Library Board selected two Democrats.

By occupation the majority of convention delegates represented prominent and important groups in the city: twenty-six were lawyers, thirty-two businessmen, two social workers, one professor, and one minister. Many of these men had been active in previous reform movements and many held either elected or appointed offices in municipal and state government, including the fifteen aldermen and fifteen state legislators. Because of this selectivity even the few ethnic delegates were mostly well-to-do businessmen. Only two subsequently joined the United Societies, and one of these men also belonged to the CFL.³⁴ Only two delegates were members of the CFL while one delegate was a black businessman.³⁵ These last three were appointed by Mayor Dunne.

This imbalance has not generally been acknowledged either by the delegates themselves or in previous studies of charter reform. Convention Chairman Milton Foreman, at the convention's concluding session, declared that "an inspection of the membership will disclose the fact that they represent every walk and condition and poll of thought in life." One recent student of Chicago reform movements followed Foreman's lead and concluded that "even more than before convention membership represented a cross-section of the city's interest groups," because more business and reform groups were represented than in previous reform attempts.³⁶

³⁴Mayor Dunne later appointed Societies' member Walter Michaelis.

³⁵The Broad-Ax, November 18, 1905.

³⁶Chicago Charter Convention, Proceedings, March 1, 1907, p. 1200-1201; McCarthy, "Businessmen and Professionals," p. 57.

That major segments of the community were virtually unrepresented at the convention has been glossed over.

It is misleading however to draw easy conclusions about the consequences of the convention's composition. First each man brought with him his own particular background, ideas, perceptions of Chicago's problems, and visions of the best government for the city, as well as the ideas of those groups for whom he believed he spoke. Similar political leanings and occupation, for instance, did not necessarily produce similar thinking or voting behavior during the convention. For instance, the concerns of Republican lawyer and banker John Smulski, a leader in the Polish community, might be expected to differ significantly from those of Walter Fisher, a Republican lawyer and leader of the Municipal Voters League; C.J. Vopicka, president of a small brewing company, might disagree considerably with John Shedd, president of Marshall Field's, the city's largest department store.

Secondly, in drafting the charter, the delegates had to confront the myriad, often conflicting, urban political issues of the period. Thus, while they generally desired a more efficient municipal government they did not always agree on what efficiency meant or how to accomplish it. George Cole of the Municipal Voters League was so pleased with the voters' response to the League crusades against the City Council that he advocated continuing to elect a number of minor public officials although this contravened the arguments that governmental efficiency required fewer elective offices. Charles Merriam proposed that a city tax system be created, while other reformers argued that this would decrease efficiency by multiplying taxing bodies. In this case Merriam believed that fiscal efficiency required not reducing taxing bodies, but

rather giving Chicago the means to control its own revenue system.³⁷

Obviously the issues at stake were complex, as were the problems of governing a city as large and diverse as Chicago. A thorough study of the charter convention, the subsequent ratification campaign, and the aftermath of the charter's failure can move us well beyond searching for reformers and non-reformers, or concentrating on the ideas and needs of a single group.

³⁷Charter Convention, Proceedings, December 6 and December 19, 1906.

CHAPTER V

THE CHARTER CONVENTION

The Chicago charter convention is of interest to historians because it reveals the concerns of many different Chicagoans and how these concerns determined what they wanted from their municipal government. The convention debated the issues of efficiency, expertise, the nature of political democracy, the purposes of local government and politics, the relationship between Chicago and the "downstate," and drafted a new city charter with these in mind; these were also the issues over which the citizens eventually supported or opposed the charter. Moreover, the convention gave the people a unique opportunity to participate in restructuring their municipal government as, in a very real sense, the convention became a forum for airing their diverse views.¹ Even before the convention convened several groups, particularly those who felt under-represented at the convention had circulated their own proposals on many

¹Citizens in other cities generally had less input into charter making. The state legislature wrote Pittsburgh's new charter; in Galveston and Houston leading businessmen secured commission charters directly from the legislature; the City Council of Los Angeles appointed a committee specifically to draft a commission charter; a Boston committee drafted a new charter which was approved by the state legislature without popular referendum. In Cincinnati, however, an elected convention wrote a new charter. See Hays, "The Politics of Reform," p. 165; Zane Miller, Boss Cox's Cincinnati (New York: Oxford, 1968), p. 222-23; Schiesl, The Politics of Efficiency, p. 102-105 and 134-36; Martin Schiesl, "Progressive Reform in Los Angeles under Mayor Alexander, 1909-1913," California Historical Quarterly 54 (Spring 1975), p. 49.

of these issues. The delegates were to remain constantly aware of the demands being made by people throughout the city while the convention was in session.

The convention first met in July 1906 to draw up rules. No records were kept of this meeting, the chief work of which appears to have been the naming of committees to study the issues that would come before the full convention; among the subjects assigned were the powers and duties of the Mayor and City Council, public education, public utilities, primary and general election rules, parks, and the initiative and referendum. The committees worked independently for the next three months and submitted their recommendations to the full body in the first week in October.

When the convention held its first regular session on November 30 its deliberations concerned the articles defining the structure and efficiency of the city's government. The debates from this session, and indeed the entire convention, reveal that the delegates had little interest in adopting the innovations elsewhere typical of the period's municipal reform campaigns.² In Boston and New York, for example, new charters eliminated the Council's power to increase the municipal budget and gave the Mayor power to appoint and remove all department heads without council confirmation. Pittsburgh and Boston each reduced the number of its city council members and changed to at-large elections. Commission governments were organized in many cities, and even where they were not instituted, reformers had often sought this change.³

²See Beard, American City Government, for an overview.

³James Crooks, Politics and Progress: The Rise of Urban Progressivism in Baltimore, 1895-1911 (Baton Rouge: LSU, 1968), p. 102-103.

In Chicago, on the contrary, many delegates to the convention believed the purpose of the new charter was not to clean up the corrupt City Council or curtail its powers, but to keep Chicago advancing along the path of reform.

The disinterest of the convention in major structural reforms reflects the opinion of many citizens that the battle against corruption had already been won. They agreed with convention member Charles Merriam that the crusades of the Municipal Voters League had "raised the Council to a cleaner and sounder basis...and gave the City for twenty years the best local legislative body in the country." Merriam also attributed Chicago's lack of corruption to the political realism of Mayor Harrison who had allowed the cosmopolitan character of Chicago to flourish, thereby avoiding splitting the city into hostile reform and non-reform camps, each struggling for control of the Council.⁴ In this same vein, Walter Fisher wrote a correspondent from Minnesota that he could "cite Chicago as a city where non-partisan municipal politics has been a practical success."⁵ Outsiders reinforced this notion of progress. Lincoln Steffens, in his famous expose of urban political corruption, congratulated Chicagoans for beginning "slow, sure, political, democratic, reform, by the people, for the people," and concluded there was "little doubt that Chicago will be cleaned up."⁶ Most delegates believed the situation was well in hand; what the city needed now, they

⁴Merriam, Chicago, p. 21-22 and 263-67.

⁵Walter L. Fisher to Leverett L. Lyon, March 12, 1906, Walter L. Fisher Papers.

⁶Lincoln Steffens, The Shame of the Cities (New York: S.S. McClure, 1902), p. 164-65.

believed, was a little more efficiency, home rule, and popular government. Most importantly, they also assumed that most of the citizens shared their views. Future events would show they misjudged the nature and extent of opposing ideas within the city, but the delegates began their work in the convention under these assumptions.

The convention first passed with little dissent the resolution consolidating the city, parks, board of education, and library board as allowed by the amendment of 1904. This provision eliminated overlapping administrative and taxing systems and centralized taxing and decision-making powers by making the parks, schools, and library departments of the city government.

No other resolution passed as easily as the delegates found out when they next considered the issue of distinguishing more clearly between the executive responsibilities of the Mayor and the legislative functions of the City Council. Some delegates wanted to alter the process of selecting the Mayor by instituting the European method of the City Council choosing one of its own members to serve in this capacity for an indefinite term, subject to removal by the Council. These delegates argued that popular election of a mayor was an American invention which functioned badly because people voted for a mayor on the basis of his political promises not his administrative expertise.⁷ In support of this idea Charles Merriam likened the city to a corporation in which the stockholders elect the board of directors, who then select the corporation officers. Delegate Frank Bennett further argued that

⁷There was a tendency among reformers to seek examples of better urban government in European cities. See Schiesl, Politics of Efficiency, p. 149-50.

the new method being proposed would insure the election of better council members because voters, knowing the Council would select the Mayor, would choose their aldermen more judiciously.⁸

The majority of the delegates accepted neither this proposal, nor an alternative proposal to divide the administrative and legislative duties between two popularly elected officials--the first to serve as Mayor and the second as President of the Council and chief legislative officer of the city. They voted instead to maintain popular election, although for varying reasons. George Thompson objected that the people viewed the Mayor as the one city official responsible to all of them and that City Council appointment would remove government from popular control. Delegates B.A. Eckhart and R.R. McCormick, on the other hand, spoke against the proposal because they did not trust the City Council; this body, they feared, might select someone they could control and not the best qualified and hence such a method would not guarantee more efficiency.⁹

The convention found a less radical way to redefine the relationship of the Mayor to the Council. On two close votes the delegates removed the Mayor as presiding officer over the Council and rescinded his right to a vote in that body.¹⁰ Under the new charter, the Council also would select its own presiding officer from among its members while the Mayor retained the right to introduce measures and exercise veto power. The delegates rejected a proposal to strip the Mayor of all legislative

⁸Charter Convention, Proceedings, November 30, 1906, p. 62-67 and 70-71.

⁹Ibid., p. 63, 68 and 62.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 85 and 90.

functions including his veto power. By making these moderate changes in the Mayor's functions, the convention believed the charter satisfied both those citizens seeking to insure the selection of a mayor competent to administer the affairs of such a large city, and those who insisted on the people's right to elect the Mayor.

Of the remaining charter provisions only the ones on the Library Board and Penal, Charitable and Reformatory Institutions passed without much discussion. As the convention proceeded the issues provoked more controversy, more pressure from groups outside the convention, and it became increasingly difficult to balance desires for efficiency, home rule, and popular government.

Since the new charter expanded the role of the City Council in Chicago's government, the convention carefully weighed procedures for constituting the Council and defining its powers and duties. At the time the city was divided into thirty-five wards, each sending two aldermen to the Council; these served two year terms and half stood for election each year. A number of delegates wanted a smaller council of thirty-five or fifty wards with one alderman each. Fewer aldermen, they argued, would carry out the city's business more efficiently because they would have less time to be preoccupied with the needs of the ward and more attentive to the whole city's needs. But the majority remained firmly ward oriented, insisting that servicing the ward was a vital duty of aldermen and that the city could not operate efficiently with any fewer aldermen.¹¹

¹¹Ibid., December 10, 1906, p. 209-10, 211, 217, 212, 213, and 214.

Delegate Alexander Revell presented an alternate proposal which simultaneously retained ward representation, acknowledged that the interests of the entire city were greater than those of the particular wards, and increased the chances of eliminating bad candidates.¹² He proposed creating sixty wards with one alderman each, with each ward nominating candidates for its alderman in a primary, and then the entire city selecting among the nominees from all wards. The convention tabled Revell's plan without debate so it is impossible to know whether they rejected it because it was too complicated and necessitated a very long ballot at voting time, or perhaps for some other reason. It seems likely however, from other debates, that the majority simply preferred a strong ward based government. The convention passed a compromise measure to redistrict the city into seventy wards with one alderman each.

A proposal to lengthen aldermanic terms to four years sparked sharp disagreement. McCormick, Walter Fisher, and Lessing Rosenthal believed this would increase efficiency because aldermen needed time to do a good job and the Council needed to serve as long as the Mayor.¹³ Opponents of the proposal, led by James Linehan and Louis Post, feared it would lessen the people's control of their elected representatives. Linehan viewed the aldermanic election as a referendum.¹⁴

The people can change their opinion inside of two years; as an expression of that change, they would change the great body of the aldermen, and that would be sufficient notification to the mayor that [a] policy is no longer desirable by the people. On

¹²Ibid., December 3, 1906, p. 90 and December 11, 1906, p. 238-40.

¹³Ibid., December 11, 1906, p. 242, 244-46, and 249.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 243.

the other hand, if [a] policy is desirable, and the aldermen are not supporting the mayor, there will be an opportunity for the people to send in someone that will support him.

Although Post supported Linehan's position, arguing that the mechanisms of popular expression should be as easy as possible to avoid potentially violent alternatives such as riots, the proponents of two year terms were a minority and the aldermanic term was lengthened. The issue was quite controversial and before the convention ended the opponents of the four year terms forced the delegates to reconsider the issue. Although the vote was much closer this time, the four year term was sustained. The disappointed proponents of the two year term remained steadfast in their view that "the only excuse an alderman has for existing at all is because the people are too numerous to meet; therefore, it is his business to reflect the opinion, the desire, and the demand of his constituents."¹⁵

One of the most important changes proposed for the city government were those concerning the nomination and election of municipal officers. City residents throughout the country were seeking to replace the old system of nominating candidates by party convention with a system giving voters a more direct voice in the nominating process and thereby making political parties more responsible for men they proposed for office. Under the prevailing system, party voters first held a "primary" to elect a convention of party delegates; these in turn nominated the party's candidates for office. Since voters tended to shun this cumbersome method, party politicians generally controlled delegate selection and voting. Reformers sought to implement either one of two changes: a

¹⁵ Ibid., February 18, 1907, p. 941.

direct primary nomination wherein party voters directly selected the party candidates, or petition nomination in which anyone securing the requisite signatures would be a candidate. The latter method had the attraction, for some of the reformers, of eliminating the party entirely from municipal politics.¹⁶

The citizens of Chicago were virtually unanimous in advocating some type of election reform, although their reasons for this varied. In 1904 they had endorsed the direct primary method by voting for a public policy proposal that the state legislature so amend the state's system.¹⁷ The CFL executive committee, just prior to the opening of the convention, circulated a resolution to its membership and state legislators declaring a direct primary law in Illinois as "essential to free government and the welfare of the people."¹⁸ The Municipal Voters League, midway through the convention, circulated an open letter to the voters urging them to work to ensure themselves of more say in nominating candidates, through either a petition or a direct primary system. While the CFL believed the direct primary was necessary to open up government to all citizens, the Voters League worried that the expanded fiscal and administrative powers given to the Council by the new charter could increase the allure of political office to grafters. Thus the League wanted to remove the party's control over nominations.¹⁹

¹⁶See Beard, American City Government, p. 58-62; Charles Merriam, Primary Elections (Chicago: 1909), passim.

¹⁷Daily News, Almanac (1905), p. 356.

¹⁸CFL, Minutes, April 15, 1906.

¹⁹Henry B. Favill and George Sikes to Voters of Chicago, January 9, 1907 in Raymond Robins Papers, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

The charter gave Chicago the opportunity to change the municipal election procedure without waiting for the legislature. The convention Committee on Elections recommended that candidates for city offices be nominated by the petition of qualified voters, but it also submitted a minority proposal for a system of direct primaries. Fisher favored nomination by petition precisely because it would remove the established parties from local elections. He believed that national party politics intruded into municipal affairs and that municipal parties, whose sole concern was the city, would handle city problems more efficiently and intelligently.²⁰

Although Fisher's position was popular among urban reformers of the period, the majority of the convention delegates feared the power of special interest groups to select their candidates under a petition system more than they feared political parties. Delegate R.A. White cautioned that the large corporations would turn the petition method to their advantage and observed "that a man who seeks nomination by petition, if he has plenty of wealth for instance, will certainly have an advantage over the man who has little or no wealth."²¹ The delegates rejected the petition method and adopted the direct primary with only four dissenting votes. The majority of the delegates so favored election reform that those backing the petition method endorsed the direct primary method after losing their proposal. George Cole epitomized their situation when voting for the direct primary he declared "If I can't get a whole loaf, I believe in taking a half a loaf..."²²

²⁰Charter Convention, Proceedings, December 3, 1906, p. 102-104.

²¹Ibid., p. 98-99 and 101.

²²Ibid., p. 111.

The Committee on Elections also recommended removing the party designation from the ballot and simply printing the names of all candidates under the office for which they were running. A typical ballot at this time was arranged by "party column" with a "party circle" at the top which voters could check to vote a straight party ticket. According to Merriam and Fisher this kind of ballot was another peculiar American innovation which discouraged independent voting and provided yet another means for national parties to control municipal elections.²³ Few of the delegates agreed with Merriam and Fisher however, some of them observing that while there was no need to facilitate straight party voting, intelligent voting did require knowing a candidate's party.²⁴ These men proposed, instead, to eliminate the party circle and column but to print the party affiliation after each candidate's name. The majority agreed with this compromise.

In this matter of party identification on the ballot the convention members appeared neither unduly afraid of the influence and power of Chicago's political parties, nor committed to the principal of non-partisan politics; before the complete charter was drafted they even voted to reinsert the party column. Fisher reproached his colleagues for drafting a charter with few items of substantial progress in municipal affairs and when they reinserted the party column he rebuked them for striking out "the one section with regard to election reform that this Convention did make any progress with regard to."²⁵ It was little

²³Ibid., December 4, 1906, p. 120-21 and 124-25.

²⁴Ibid., p. 119-20, 122-23, and 127-28.

²⁵Ibid., February 16, 1907, p. 881-82.

consolation to Fisher when the delegates stopped an attempt supported almost exclusively by the professional politicians in their midst, to delete any ballot modifications from the charter altogether.

Once these various changes to Chicago's internal government were agreed upon, the convention turned its attention to the relationship of the city and state. Home rule had been a strong motive behind the charter reform movement, and because a new charter would supersede the 1872 incorporation act many believed that the delegates could redefine the balance of powers between the city and the state if they so chose. Yet agreement on this issue was not easily reached. While most Chicagoans agreed they wanted more home rule, their reasons for desiring it varied and they disagreed on how extensive it should be and on how much authority the city had in defining its own home rule powers. Since the City Council was designated the supreme legislative body of the city by the new charter, the battle over home rule was fought over the statement on the powers of the Council.

The outside pressure put on the delegates over this issue illuminates the disagreements over home rule. The CFL had already declared that home rule was the most crucial feature of the new charter. In early 1905, immediately after ratification of the enabling amendment, the CFL had adopted a resolution calling for a strong home rule charter which would grant the city complete control of its streets, public utilities, franchises, street railways, municipal services, and all purely local government and business affairs without any interference or control by the state legislature. It conceded to state interests only in areas of safety, health, and the general commerce and communi-

cation of the state.²⁶ Labor demanded that the charter specifically grant this home rule power to the City Council, and that the specific grant be reinforced by strong home rule statements in the charter's various provisions.

Before the convention had even met, Alderman Edward Cullerton (D-11th) had presented a strong home rule charter plan to the City Council. Cullerton proposed to reverse state domination of local governments by giving Chicago complete power to conduct its local as well as not purely local affairs, except as expressly forbidden by the state or federal constitutions. To ensure this home rule power, Cullerton's plan also provided that in the event of any legal doubt, the specific case should always be decided in favor of Chicago.²⁷ The City Council tabled this proposal but several days later the Chicago Socialist published a copy of what it called the Socialists' Proposed Charter which demanded many of the same things.²⁸

The United Societies, immediately following its organization, decided to use the charter to sever the state legislature's control over liquor regulation and municipal affairs in general. It submitted a broad home rule resolution to the convention asking that the charter vest the City Council with "all powers of local legislation which may under the constitution be vested in a municipality."²⁹ The Societies believed it had a vital interest in this matter. It contended that

²⁶CFL, Minutes, January 8, 1905.

²⁷Chicago, Journal of the City Council, January 2, 1906, p. 2014-20.

²⁸Chicago Socialist, January 10, 1906.

²⁹Charter Convention, Proceedings, December 6, 1906, p. 190.

there was a grave danger of prohibition if the charter failed to contain a provisions about liquor regulation. Legally, the city would remain bound by any general state laws which were not specifically nullified by the new charter. Because a new charter would supersede the 1872 incorporation act--the law which provided the legal loophole for municipalities to regulate liquor themselves--the general law on Sunday closings, as well as any future laws on liquor regulation would be applied in Chicago.

The Societies therefore requested that the charter specifically vest the City Council with sole power to regulate Sunday, and the sale of liquor at social gatherings and entertainments. The Societies emphasized that such a provision merely legalized the prevailing customs and would reflect, it believed, the sentiments of four-fifths of the community.³⁰

On the other side of the temperance issue, delegate Bennett offered a counter resolution. He proposed that nothing in the charter give the City Council power to modify, impair, or conflict with the state laws regulating the sale of liquor.³¹ The organization of Chicago Methodist Episcopal Preachers dispatched a letter to the convention endorsing Bennett's resolution and declaring that their congregations "desire the Charter to be proposed in such a form that they can give it their heartiest support, with the assurances that the moral interests of Chicago are safeguarded thereby."³²

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., December 3, 1906, p. 114.

³² Ibid., December 10, 1906, p. 208.

Instead of addressing these demands, the delegates debated the legalities of home rule. According to Joseph O'Donnell the correct interpretation of the 1904 enabling amendment was that it now allowed Chicago to substitute local and special legislation of its own for general state laws, and he was dismayed that the convention did not seem to want to take advantage of this freedom. David Shanahan (a state legislator) on the other hand, contended that the amendment merely gave the state legislature authority to pass special legislation for Chicago, and warned that the General Assembly would not pass a charter in which Chicago attempted to assert its authority in this area. The convention majority agreed with Shanahan and adopted a weak home rule provision which specified that the city did not intend to assume any home rule powers which conflicted with any general state law. Moreover, the charter acknowledged the superior legal position of the state by bestowing on Chicago only those municipal powers which "can be constitutionally delegated to it by the legislature."³³ The convention then deferred considering the question of liquor regulation until some future session.

This action truly alarmed the United Societies which believed that prohibition was virtually certain under this provision once the new charter nullified the 1872 incorporation act. The group immediately petitioned the convention to reconsider the general home rule provisions and to provide home rule on liquor, and it accused delegates Bennett and B.W. Snow, who were leading the fight against the latter, of collusion

³³Ibid., December 13, 1906, p. 296 and 298.

with statewide temperance forces.³⁴ This weak home rule clause obviously contravened the wishes of several groups in the city and the consequences of this action would be felt during the subsequent ratification campaign.

As the convention progressed formidable pressure from outside and sharp differences of opinion among the delegates complicated the convention's work. Agreement proved difficult to reach on the issues which had become increasingly controversial among the citizens: direct popular democracy, municipal ownership, the school system, and others. For ease in exposition these issues will be discussed one at a time.

Direct Democracy

Many Chicagoans wanted a greater share and more direct control over their city government through the power to initiate legislation and to approve legislation by popular referendum. In 1902 and 1904 the voters had approved public policy referenda on these questions³⁵ and the CFL and Socialists now fought to include the initiative and referendum in the charter. The CFL adamantly maintained that a charter without these reforms was not a home rule charter and that it would urge its membership to oppose such a charter. The Socialists demanded the referendum, initiative, and recall--in fact the explicit aim of their proposed charter was to implement extensive popular control of the municipal government.³⁶

³⁴Ibid., December 26, 1906, p. 712-14; Abendpost, December 22, 1906.

³⁵See above, Chapter 3, p. 68.

³⁶CFL, Minutes, December 2, 1906; the Socialist, January 10, 1906.

The delegates divided sharply on this issue; while most expressed support for the principle of more direct popular government they disagreed on how easy and extensive to make this, and whether some legislation, for example the granting of franchises, could be enacted only after a popular vote was taken. Delegates Snow and B.A. Eckhart wanted a conservative referendum measure. They proposed that the signatures of twenty-five percent of the voters be required in order "to show that a very respectable minority of the people" supported the calling of a referendum. Although few of the other delegates wanted to require that high a percentage of signatures, they rejected a motion to set the number at fifteen percent.³⁷

The proponents of a low percentage requirement accused their opposition of paying only lip service to the principle and attempting to placate the people by including some provision for referendum while setting the requirements impossibly high. Raymond Robins declared it was a question "of a real referendum or of a sham referendum; a power that can really be exercised, or one that is prepared for the purpose of its not being exercised." Siding with Robins was Joseph O'Donnell who maintained that the high percentage favored the "public utility franchise-seeking corporations that have done their best to kill Chicago." But even the observation of Charles Merriam that if a question was so important that it could secure fifty or sixty thousand votes (approximately fifteen percent) it was unfair to require more failed to persuade the opponents of the fifteen percent requirement and the convention adjourned

³⁷Charter Convention, Proceedings, December 17, 1906, p. 378-79 and 388.

for the day without resolving the issue.³⁸

During the convention's tenure, the people were kept well-informed of its daily proceedings: at least one of the newspapers could be relied on to report the debates and decisions of the day, and the convention members themselves frequently apprised interested groups of the status of specific issues. Hence groups outside the convention were generally able to respond quickly to the action of the convention. In this case the CFL immediately put more pressure on the convention to pass a lenient initiative and referendum clause. It sent a letter to the convention demanding that the charter set only a five percent ceiling for both the initiative and referendum "in accordance with the expressed will of the people" as shown by the votes taken in 1902 and 1904. These reforms were absolutely necessary, wrote the CFL, to bring democracy to Chicago and stop the "vulgar aristocracy" from running things to suit itself.³⁹ The CFL did not make the most radical demands on this issue. The Socialists wanted the charter to require only a flat ten thousand signatures for both the initiative and referendum.⁴⁰ When the convention reconvened James Linehan proposed the five percent limit but the delegates defeated this and instead adopted a limit of twenty percent.

The handling of initiative and referendum was typical of the convention's attitude toward popular democracy. In general, the delegates preferred to let elected officials decide policy and extended few decision-making powers to the citizens. The convention never contemplated

³⁸ Ibid., p. 379, 385, and 386.

³⁹ Ibid., December 17, 1906, p. 406; CFL, Minutes, December 16, 1906.

⁴⁰ Chicago Socialist, January 10, 1906.

instituting the recall which was a major component of popular government reforms elsewhere. It also refused to provide the power to initiate legislation--the twenty percent limit was solely for referendum--, restricted the referendum to ordinances granting franchises, and rejected a proposal to require a mandatory city-wide referendum on franchises granted for over five years. At its final session the delegates reconsidered the referendum issue and voted to lower the signature limit to ten percent. Those men who had previously rejected ten percent as too high now accepted it as the best they could get, and those who had favored twenty percent now believed that other safeguards in the charter adequately protected the city against unreasonable referenda. Some of the delegates protested to the end against any extension of direct democracy, warning that it was foolhardy to allow foreign voters (i.e. the immigrants) to decide on questions they did not understand.⁴¹

Municipal Services

No issue was more volatile and controversial in cities in the early twentieth century than that of providing and maintaining municipal services, and Chicago, as has been seen, was no exception. Chicagoans were demanding change in the methods of granting franchises to street railways and public utilities with many citizens actively promoting municipal ownership; various groups in the city were debating priorities and goals in recreation and the hiring and firing of city employees. Despite the debate over these issues in the city, however, the convention had little problem deciding what it wanted in the charter.

⁴¹Charter Convention, Proceedings, December 17, 1906, p. 417-18.

The convention decisively rejected the calls for complete municipal ownership. Instead, it took Walter Fisher's advice that adequate and effective public control and regulation would eliminate existing intolerable public utility abuses, while abating popular desire for total public ownership and operation.⁴² The delegates therefore extended the Mueller Law to cover all utilities and strengthened the city's power to regulate rates charged by utilities, and forbade the City Council ever to limit or grant away this right. They also accepted Post's amendment to substitute a simple majority vote for the three-fifths vote required by the Mueller Law, although several delegates objected. Bennett opposed the lower total because it made municipal ownership easier to institute. In debating this issue he, and others, once again voiced their fears of popular decision-making, predicting that there would always be a "large percentage of the unthinking part of the population that would always be ready to vote on anything that would change the existing conditions."⁴³

Having decided early in its deliberations to consolidate the parks with the city government, the convention also had to decide how the parks were to be administered under the new charter. Instead of the existing system of three park boards, each levying its own taxes and controlling all park land within its district, the proposed charter created a City Department of Parks overseen by a Board of Park Commissioners appointed by the Mayor; the City Council was granted power to levy and

⁴²Walter L. Fisher to John V. Farwell, February 13, 1906, Walter L. Fisher Papers.

⁴³Charter Convention, Proceedings, March 1, 1907, p. 1174 and 1176-77.

distribute tax revenues and issue bonds for park purposes, enact all necessary rules and regulations for governing and protecting parks, and with the two-third consent of the Board, discontinue, acquire, or alter any public park property. There was almost no dissent within the convention on this issue and most discussion centered around whether the Mayor, Governor, or Appellate Court Judges would appoint the Commissioners. The majority agreed that mayoral appointment was the only way consistent with home rule.⁴⁴

The convention modified the city's existing civil service system in one significant way: it empowered department heads to remove any employee with a formal hearing for any cause "which will promote the efficiency of the service."⁴⁵ While accepting this provision because it promised increased efficiency, the delegates rejected two other proposals which supposedly would have brought more efficiency into the government. First they placed the employees of the new municipal court system under civil service, in spite of the plea from delegate Snow that these people needed to be chosen and retained for their responsibility, judgment, and honesty and this could be accomplished better outside of civil service. Second, they refused to make the bailiff and chief clerk of the municipal court appointed offices. In this last decision the majority of delegates were still feeling optimistic about the voters' ability to elect good men to municipal offices--an optimism generated by the cleaned-up Council.⁴⁶

⁴⁴Ibid., December 15, 1906, p. 363-66.

⁴⁵Ibid., November 30, 1906, p. 52.

⁴⁶Ibid., December 6, 1906, p. 157, 162 and 185.

The delegates clearly knew what they wanted to do about public utilities, parks, and civil service and they adopted these sections with little dissent. Their unity, however, did not reflect accurately sentiment throughout the city. The delegates misunderstood the extent of opposing opinions on these issues, and they were to become important issues in the referendum campaign.

Schools

The convention did have greater difficulty handling the charter's education section. Schools were an emotional and divisive issue. Parents wanted some voice in their childrens' education; taxpayers wanted assurances that their money was properly spent; teachers and educators held their own ideas of the proper priorities of education, and teachers sought to protect and better their own places in the system. Education also divided people philosophically between those who thought it most important to make schools accountable to the citizens as a logical extension of popular democracy and those who believed that the efficacy and democracy of the school system depended primarily on fiscal and administrative efficiency. Realistically, everyone worried about who controlled the school system and in the convention education became a test of power among various groups in the city.

In early October of 1906 the Merchants' Club asked that their committee on education be allowed to assist the convention's education committee in drafting the charter provisions to organize Chicago's schools on a "rational and business-like basis."⁴⁷ This request evoked an out-

⁴⁷Ibid., October 3, 1906, p. 2

pouring of criticism and counter demands. The Public charged that businessmen were attempting to run the schools by "business methods" which really meant despotic rule by the Superintendent. Speaking at a special meeting of the CFL called to discuss the education issue, Louis Post accused the convention of designing an educational system "drawn up by a few members of the Merchants' Club in a back room of the Union League Club" who were "attempting through the proposed charter to wrest the control of the public schools from the people."⁴⁸ Margaret Dreier Robins, a prominent member of the Chicago Women's Trade Union League was so alarmed by the situation that she wrote to Lincoln Steffens asking him to come to Chicago to expose the plotting of businessmen to take over the schools.⁴⁹ "Mass meetings are called by these reverend gentlemen 'to consider the crisis in the public schools'," she wrote Steffens

and a petition has been signed by Mr. Gustavus Swift, packer, and others to be sent to the Charter Convention "to curb the power of the School Board". The Merchants' Club is preparing a "ripper" bill to present to the next legislature to legislate the present school Board out of existence....Why have all the privileged interests of the city combined to make this attack and make it so venomously?

The CFL joined the protest and wrote a letter to the convention reminding the delegates that the voters had approved a public policy proposal to elect the Board of Education and demanding that the charter provide for electing school board members, paying them an adequate

⁴⁸The Public, November 17, 1906; CFL, Minutes, December 2, 1906.

⁴⁹Mary E. Dreier, Margaret Dreier Robins: Her Life, Letters, and Work (New York: 1950), p. 96.

salary, and vesting full control of the public schools in their hands and not the Superintendent's. The CFL promised to

resist by every honorable means any attempt of any and all interests and influences to take away the control of the Chicago school system from the people of Chicago....and to stand opposed to any measure...that would place the educational system of Chicago in the hands and under the control of one man...

and warned the convention it would accept nothing less than these demands.⁵⁰

The convention's Committee on Education drafted a lengthy article on education, and the delegates deliberated this in light of the various proposals they had received. The debates over this education article reflected the citizens' conflicts on this issue. From the beginning of the debates, however, the majority of the delegates made the administrative efficiency of the schools their top priority. Speaking for the members of the education committee, Graham Taylor explained that their education article embodied sufficiently detailed specifications to "assure administrative efficiency." He dismissed the CFL's letter as "right in theory but inefficient...and nothing can be worse for democracy than inefficiency."⁵¹

Raymond Robins immediately offered an amendment to replace the mayoral appointment of the Board of Education with popular election, and this issue set a standard for the remaining debates on education. The delegates' ideas of the role and function of the Board affected their

⁵⁰ Charter Convention, Proceedings, December 20, 1906, p. 561. In 1904 the voters approved the idea of an elected school board by a margin of over two to one. Daily News, Almanac (1905), p. 385.

⁵¹ Charter Convention, Proceedings, December 20, 1906, p. 562 and 565.

votes on other school issues and their arguments reveal a resolute separation between those advocating efficiency and expertise and those favoring more popular control of municipal affairs. In general, delegates voting for popular election tended to vote in favor of placing more power in the hands of the Board than the Superintendent, guaranteeing teacher salaries, and reducing the number of school board members.

Though each side argued that its method of selecting the school board protected the board from partisan party politics the true issue was who controlled the board. In fact it was somewhat ludicrous for delegates Revell and Raymer to suggest to the convention that electing school board members by petition nomination--the only method proposed--would open the school system to party politics when this same method had been advocated to remove party politics from all municipal elections.⁵² Post and Robins, on the other side, believed an elected board reflected the will of the community and kept special interests from seizing control of education. Others assumed certain special interests ought to be in charge of the schools and that the city could only get that "class of men" by appointment and not by election.⁵³

When the convention rejected the proposal for an elected school board Louis Post attempted to counter the drift toward efficiency by introducing two amendments aimed at dispersing power within the school system to make it more democratic and aimed at treating teachers as the real experts on education. First he proposed giving the school board

⁵²Ibid., p. 570-71.

⁵³Ibid., p. 569, 572-74, and 575.

rather than the Superintendent the power to introduce textbooks, and to appoint, promote and transfer teachers and principals. Second, he proposed that the charter firmly protect the position of teachers within the system by giving them direct access to the Board with their suggestions on education and by guaranteeing that their salaries would never be reduced during their tenure in the system. Post made these proposals because he concurred with the CFL's fear of giving one person too much control, and his tenure as a school board member had convinced him that differing ideas could be represented there and perhaps heeded.⁵⁴

The convention defeated both of these amendments, also rejecting delegate White's proposal that the Board be able to remove the Superintendent by a majority and not a two-thirds vote. In so doing, the convention confirmed its desire to have a strong Superintendent of Education, independent of the Board and not subject to removal, as one delegate put it, by the "whim or caprice of a majority."⁵⁵

The convention did stop short of regarding efficiency and expertise as the ruling criteria of public education. Delegate Raymer proposed reducing the Board from fifteen to nine members because a smaller Board would transact better the "business of education." Robins lamented this tendency to view business efficiency as the supreme function of the Board of Education and suggested the Board had to "be in touch with the people's interests because education is the hope of the

⁵⁴The Public, November 17, 1906; Post, "Living a Long Life Over," p. 351. Post thought it only fair to guarantee teacher salaries since the charter's education provision included a clause guaranteeing the salaries of school system officers.

⁵⁵Charter Convention, Proceedings, December 26, 1906, p. 718 and 722; December 22, p. 675; February 25, 1907, p. 1081-84.

people and the hope of society." Although they had turned down an elected school board, the majority of the delegates sympathized with Robins on this issue. They believed that once the proper people had been appointed, the Board did represent the community interest and that a larger board could more thoroughly investigate the educational needs of the entire community.⁵⁶ Therefore the delegates voted to reject the proposal to reduce the size of the Board.

The last issue which the convention had to consider on the school system was Linehan's proposal to pay the board members \$2500 a year to make it financially feasible for more citizens to serve on the Board. The existing school board served without pay, and—as Louis Post had already realized personally—serving on the Board could be an economic hardship for anyone without a lot of spare time and money.⁵⁷ B.A. Eckhart protested this proposal, saying that people willing to serve out of public experience and civic pride would produce a more capable board, while other delegates worried that paid positions would turn into political plums.⁵⁸ Linehan attacked the idea of the worthiness of civic pride as a blatant attempt to keep the board in control of only those who were wealthy enough to afford serving without pay. Why, he asked was the great civic pride of a millionaire without children "any more worthy of recognition than the pride of the workmen, who supply all the children and all the money for the maintenance of the public institutions of this city";

⁵⁶ Ibid., December 21, 1906, p. 608-13, 614-16, and 617.

⁵⁷ Post, "Living a Long Life Over," p. 294.

⁵⁸ Charter Convention, Proceedings, December 21, 1906, p. 620 and 622; February 25, 1907, p. 1065.

or why was the businessman who has spent his life chasing the "almighty dollar" of sounder character to serve on the Board?⁵⁹ Robins supported Linehan's proposal as a way to make the Board more responsible to the people whose taxes paid their salary.

The delegates opposed this matter less vigorously than the elected school board--perhaps feeling that if they were on the Board they would like to get paid--but they did not pass this amendment. No one questioned the city's financial ability to pay the Board, and since the convention subsequently passed a resolution allowing the City Council to pass an ordinance to this effect, it does not seem likely that money was the reason for the delegate's refusal to concur with paying the school board members.⁶⁰ More probably, they agreed with Eckhart's notion of civic pride and civic duty, and some undoubtedly believed that the wrong class of citizens could be kept off of the Board if there was no remuneration for serving.

Municipal Revenues

Not surprisingly, revenue was an important and contentious issue in the charter convention. The delegates worried about the correct interpretation of the enabling amendment and just how much freedom it gave them to change the existing governmental and revenue structures. They professed to trust their strong city council government, but they hesitated giving it anything other than explicit powers. They were often uncertain on how to protect the rights of property owners while making Chicago a good, safe, healthy place to live. As a result they chose not

⁵⁹ Ibid., December 21, 1906, p. 622-24.

⁶⁰ Ibid., February 25, 1907, p. 1067.

to make a strong bid for extensive home rule, instead maintaining the framework of the existing municipal revenue system and simply and cautiously revising its internal operations.

From the beginning of the convention a few delegates worked to secure complete home rule powers for Chicago in determining its revenue system. When the Committee on Municipal Taxation and Revenue proposed sections itemizing allowable tax rates, types of permissible taxes, and the taxing powers of the City Council, Post, Linehan, and Joseph Patterson proposed that the charter simply vest in the Council power to raise revenue for municipal purposes.⁶¹ Post argued that the 1904 amendment intended Chicago to have full powers of governing itself on taxation, and thus his proposal was not only sensible, but also assured the city of fiscal home rule.⁶² As a check against abuse of this power by the Council, the three men recommended that the charter provide for mandatory vetoes by popular referendum on all subjects regarding revenue.⁶³ This proposition must have caused violent shuddering among many of the delegates; it was hardly the way to achieve business-like efficiency in city government. Merriam declared that he himself regarded "certain financial restrictions and limitations and safeguards upon the power of the city as essential," and that efficient home rule necessitated fixed

⁶¹Ibid., October 3, 1906, p. 7-8.

⁶²Ibid., December 18, 1906, p. 467. The exact wording of the amendment allowed the General Assembly to pass "any law providing a scheme or charter of local municipal government...and [such law or laws] may provide for the assessment of property and the levy and collection of taxes within said city for corporate purposes..." The convention members disagreed on the interpretation of this clause.

⁶³Charter Convention, Proceedings, October 3, 1906, p. 8.

statutory limits on bonded indebtedness, taxing rates, and other financial powers of the city.⁶⁴ The overwhelming majority of the delegates agreed with Merriam and easily defeated this proposal. They did not want a municipal revenue system which carried home rule and direct democracy to their ultimate conclusions.

While the delegates acknowledged the state's authority to set tax rates and limits on municipal indebtedness, many believed the city needed at least to replace the system by which the Cook County Board of Assessors determined the value of city property. Merriam, in his exhaustive report on Chicago's municipal revenues for the City Club, concluded that the charter needed to replace this county system with a city tax system, and he joined Post, Linehan, and Patterson in proposing this to the convention.⁶⁵ Merriam believed this change would guarantee both efficiency and home rule. He argued that Chicago could only control its revenue system if it controlled its taxation; for example, if the city could raise its property valuation it would be able to borrow more money and perhaps simultaneously lower the tax rate, saving Chicagoans from higher taxes. Merriam believed this method would insure adequate funds for municipal expenses, make the city government primarily responsible and accountable to its citizens for its expenditures, and effect municipal home rule. To support his position he reminded the convention that Chicago had a city tax system prior to the incorporation act of 1872, and that all large cities in the United States controlled their own tax assessment, collection, and distribution. James Linehan put the

⁶⁴Ibid., December 18, 1906, p. 468.

⁶⁵Ibid., October 3, 1906, p. 8.

more simply, declaring he supported the proposal because it was "a matter of home rule...shall ninety-two percent of the voting people do the assessing or shall eight percent..."⁶⁶

The convention did not agree and quickly defeated the proposition, although the delegates raised minimal objections. McCormick protested that "raising valuation to raise money is dishonest" but offered no substantive argument against the principle or efficiency of a city tax system. Frank Shepard opposed the change on the grounds that it would create another taxing body--an anathema to many proponents of municipal efficiency--but no other delegates voiced support for his reasoning.⁶⁷ The reasons for the defeat of a city tax system lay in other areas than the objections of McCormick and Shepard.

Political maneuvering undoubtedly played a role. All ten of the appointees of the state legislature who were present voted against the proposal, as did Shepard, an appointee of the County Board of Commissioners--this Board of course stood to lose a substantial degree of power if Chicago was granted its own tax system. However, the primary reason why most of the delegates refused to create a city tax system was that they thought consolidation itself would produce a more efficient municipal revenue system and provide adequate means for raising more money. Consolidation automatically increased the city's bonding power to five percent of full property valuation and its tax levy to five percent of assessed valuation.

⁶⁶Merriam, Municipal Revenues, p. 94-95; Charter Convention, Proceedings, December 19, 1906, p. 526-28, December 20, p. 559.

⁶⁷Charter Convention, Proceedings, December 19, 1906, p. 528-30, December 20, p. 558-61.

Once they had decided to rely on consolidation as the primary means to achieve fiscal reform the delegates needed to devise a new system under which the city would control all property tax revenue and the issuing of bonds, and the disbursement of these funds. The majority quickly agreed that the City Council determine annually the respective amounts levied for corporate, park, school, and library purposes from the five percent tax on the city's assessed property valuation, as well as issue, disburse, and repay municipal bonds. They particularly liked the flexibility of this system because unlike the prevailing one it allowed the city to vary its expenditures from year to year according to where the money was needed most.⁶⁸

The convention was not unanimous, however; some members were skeptical of leaving the levies unspecified. To guarantee that schools would be adequately financed Post, Robins, and White—all members of the Board of Education—presented an amendment to set a minimum amount which would be appropriated yearly for school expenses. Their experience on the school board had made them wary of trusting politicians too far when it came to running the schools. Post and Robins in particular thought that in the absence of any significant popular control over the Council's actions, the charter needed to set more specific limitations on the Council's fiscal prerogatives.⁶⁹ Delegates Cole, Hoyne, and Bennett on the other hand believed that the system of unspecified levies was much more efficient and the convention easily defeated the amendment.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Ibid., December 18, 1906, p. 464.

⁶⁹ Ibid., February 25, 1907, p. 1044-48, and 1050-51.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 1046, and 1049-52.

The final revenue question considered by the convention was the problem of special licenses and assessments. In preceding years, the city had relied more and more on these taxes to supplement its other inadequate tax and bond revenues, and the citizens complained bitterly about these added burdens. The delegates believed that the license taxes were vital and a fair exchange for privileges received from the city. Although John Shedd, vice-president of Marshall Field's, protested that the city had no power to do so, the convention authorized the Council to impose such a tax on any trade, business, or occupation in the city and on all persons, firms, or corporations holding franchises from the city. The delegates also agreed to impose a tax on all wheeled vehicles operating within the city.⁷¹

The question of special assessments to pay for local improvements was more troublesome and the convention refused to extend the City Council's unlimited power to levy such taxes. As property owners many of the convention members wanted to relieve themselves and their fellow property owners of some of this burden and therefore they put a ceiling on special assessments. What this ceiling should be prompted some disagreement among the delegates. Pointing out that people from all over the city used the streets, Smulski and O'Donnell wanted no special assessment after the first improvement. B.A. Eckhart supported this in theory, but suggested that realistically the cost had to be divided, perhaps with the city paying seventy-five percent and the property owner the remaining twenty-five percent. While there was a great deal of support for reducing the property owner's share, most of the delegates had

⁷¹Ibid., October 3, 1906, p. 9, December 18, p. 470.

to agree with Bernard Sunny that it was "theoretically right but financially impractical" for the city to pay the seventy-five percent. Merriam offered what he thought was the most practical compromise: property owners would only be assessed for fifty percent of the cost after the first improvement. The delegates agreed to this compromise for two reasons. First because it relieved the burden of property owners while protecting property values--they all acknowledged that unimproved streets depressed property values. Secondly, because they were willing to concede that the city could not pay the entire cost of improvements and without special assessments the citizens would be reduced to fighting for available funds.⁷²

The debate over special assessments is indicative of the limited constituency of the convention, for the delegates clearly concerned themselves only with the burdens of property. Only Louis Post seriously asked how special assessments affected the majority of Chicagoans--the renters. Post wanted the convention to devise a method of prohibiting the property owners from passing their special assessment costs on to their tenants. After all, he argued, if the owners were the ones benefitting financially, why should the tenants pay? Furthermore, Post believed that the property owners should pay a special tax against any financial benefits which they gained from local improvements.⁷³ The convention supported neither of Post's positions, and not even Post contemplated how to make non-resident property owners pay for street im-

⁷²Ibid., December 18, 1906, p. 471-76, and 481.

⁷³Ibid., p. 478-80, and 487.

provements, although recent investigations of city street conditions had questioned the adequacy and fairness of a situation in which poor renters could not afford, and absentee landlords refused to pay for street improvements.⁷⁴

In general the convention respected the rights of property. It limited the special assessment taxes and defeated a motion to repeal the municipal ordinance requiring frontage consents from property owners as a prior condition for granting franchises. Proponents of repeal had spoken of placing the general good before the desires of individual property owners, but the majority disagreed with this position.⁷⁵ On one issue though the delegates switched their thinking. The new charter empowered the City Council to enforce tenement ordinances by making reasonable repairs and then charging the owner, if the owner refused to make the repairs after adequate notification by the city. A few delegates protested that this was an arbitrary violation of property rights and attempted to delete this section from the charter. Raymond Robins strongly supported the proposal arguing that tenants had a right to decent housing and the city a responsibility to provide it. The votes on previous issues suggest however that most of the delegates were moved more by Merriam's argument that this provision was essential to protect the city's health conditions. On this issue the general good apparently prevailed over property rights because it was easier for the delegates to see that unhealthy, unsanitary housing posed potential dangers to the

⁷⁴Hunter, Tenement Conditions in Chicago, p. 116.

⁷⁵Charter Convention, Proceedings, December 14, 1906, p. 338-39.

whole city than to accept that the general welfare demanded the repeal of frontage consents.⁷⁶

Woman Suffrage

The convention saved two controversial issues for last. The first was the question of giving women the municipal franchise. Many women in the city wanted to vote in municipal elections as did women throughout the country at this time.⁷⁷ Some women believed they should have the municipal franchise because municipal problems resembled the problems in the home and family; keeping a city clean, healthy, and running smoothly, they argued, was similar to managing a house and family and who understood these problems better than women? Women who owned property believed it only just that they have a voice in deciding tax and property matters, while working women sought the vote to help protect their working conditions.

In Chicago several groups urged the convention to include municipal suffrage for women in the new charter. The Women's Trade Union League endorsed municipal suffrage "that the women working in our city may better protect their labor," and requested the CFL to work to get this put into the charter.⁷⁸ The prestigious Chicago Woman's Club sent its members a letter informing them of the possibility of securing the franchise through the new charter and asked them to do whatever they could to

⁷⁶Ibid., February 23, 1907, p. 1015-17.

⁷⁷Aileen Krador, The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890-1920 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), p. 3-4.

⁷⁸CFL, Minutes, April 1, 1906.

help accomplish this.⁷⁹ Jane Addams headed a federation of one hundred women's organizations pursuing suffrage and the variety of women seeking the vote and their reasons impressed her.⁸⁰

We were joined...by organizations of working women who had keenly felt the need of the municipal franchise in order to secure for their workshops the most rudimentary sanitation...by federations of mothers' meetings, who were interested in clean milk and the extension of kindergartens...by property-owning women, who had been powerless to protest against unjust taxation; by organizations of professional women, of university students, and of collegiate alumnae; by women's clubs interested in municipal reforms...

Addams herself believed that the "government of the city is now merely enlarged housekeeping."⁸¹ The investigations of her Hull-House Women's Club into garbage, street cleaning, and other sanitation problems had effectuated the only improvements in the neighborhood's conditions, and helped convince her that women better understood certain municipal problems. The experience also persuaded her that voluntary efforts were insufficient and needed to be reinforced with political power. When groups of immigrant women from the Hull-House neighborhood told Addams they wanted the right to vote, she believed that "the time must be ripe for political expression of that public concern on the part of women which had so long been forced to seek indirection." She urged the men to give women the "opportunity to cooperate directly in civic life through the use of the ballot in regard to their own affairs."⁸²

⁷⁹Chicago Woman's Club, Minutes of Board Meetings, September 26, 1906, in Chicago Woman's Club Papers, Chicago Historical Society.

⁸⁰Addams, p. 237.

⁸¹Record-Herald, March 7, 1906. This was in a speech given to the Lake View Woman's Club.

⁸²Addams, p. 203-206, and 237-38.

Not all women agreed of course and the Illinois Association Opposed to the Extension of Suffrage to Women also communicated with the convention. The Association claimed that suffrage was impractical because women did not vote in large numbers when they received the franchise. Its real emphasis, however, was on one of the more popular anti-suffrage arguments of the period: that woman suffrage undermined the family, children, and urban society. Women did not help society by voting, said the Association, but by staying home and cultivating their children's souls because "children who are the outcome of such homes only rarely become 'mashers' or 'hoodlums' or degenerates of any sort." These anti-suffragists direly predicted mass voting by women in the red-light districts and that "ambitious, self-seeking, unscrupulous women" would join forces with the ward-healers and political bosses. Rather than helping solve municipal problems, they warned, woman suffrage promised to add more unfit voters to the electorate.⁸³ To counter these allegations, the Illinois Equal Suffrage Association asked Raymond Robins to lead the fight for suffrage in the convention.⁸⁴

⁸³ Illinois Association Opposed to the Extension of Suffrage to Women, "A Protest Against the Granting of Municipal Suffrage to Women in the City of Chicago," unpublished pamphlet, Chicago Historical Society. See Kraditor, p. 12-26 for complete explanation of anti-suffrage ideas. Also, it was the nature of the movement for each side to attempt to turn the other's arguments around. Hence suffragists argued that rather than restricting themselves to the home, women needed "to exercise their purifying influence in the voting booth," and that extending suffrage would add more socially acceptable voters to the electorate to stand against the machines and immigrants. See Mary P. Ryan, Womanhood in America: From Colonial Times to the Present (New York: Franklin Watts, 1975), p. 245; Kraditor, p. 106.

⁸⁴ Catherine Waugh McCullough to Raymond Robins, November 30, 1906, Raymond Robins Papers.

Women representing both sides of the issue appeared before the convention's committee on elections, but when the committee recommended five to four against conferring suffrage on women, proponents of suffrage petitioned the convention to waive its rules and allow women to speak before the entire body. Louis Post argued that the issue was so important and the committee vote so close that the convention might well profit from hearing the petitions directly. He urged his fellow delegates to schedule a specific date for hearing this question and invite women to address the group. Post believed that this was only a fair and just repayment to women of the city, whom he thought were partially responsible for there being a charter convention.⁸⁵

I think it is not stating too much to say that if it had not been for the action of the women in this community who are in favor of women's suffrage, we would have no occasion for taking up this question today because no satisfactory amendment would have gone to the legislature and we would not have had the opportunity.

Even more to the point Post, ever concerned with the people's right to representation, argued that women had no direct representation in the convention and deserved the right to be heard on this issue.⁸⁶

B.A. Eckhart protested that if the convention permitted women to speak directly to the convention every group in the city would demand a hearing, and while some delegates sympathized with Post's ideas, they, like Eckhart, did not wish to set a precedent they might later regret. The delegates tabled the motion to invite women to address the body. Fisher suggested to his fellow delegates that they could best

⁸⁵Charter Convention, Proceedings, December 4, 1906, p. 130-31.

⁸⁶The Public, January 5, 1907.

acquaint themselves with the issue by attending one of the community meetings held by suffrage advocates.⁸⁷

When the convention finally confronted the issue of woman suffrage, the delegates' views mirrored those of the larger society. Reverend White summarized the pro-suffrage arguments: women were taxpayers, had vital interests in urban affairs, could not be assumed to agree with their husbands--in fact, could not be assumed to have husbands--and the failure to allow women to vote is "an injustice to the working women of Chicago, it is wrong and it is absolutely unAmerican." For White and other supporters of suffrage, any or all of these reasons sufficed to extend suffrage. On the other side of the question Rosenthal contended that only a small percent wanted to vote; Hoyne protested against "dragging women down from the pedestal to mix in ward politics"; and Hill warned that the wrong class of women would vote and the "influence of the ladies that we seek to obtain will not be obtained."⁸⁸ The opponents of suffrage prevailed and defeated an amendment to give women the municipal franchise by a vote of seventeen to twenty-six.

In January the Equal Suffrage Association asked delegates Robins, Post, Taylor, McGoorty, White, and MacMillan to a meeting to decide what further steps they could take on the suffrage question. Although Robins could not attend, Catherine McCullough subsequently informed him that those present had acknowledged there was no hope of garnering enough votes to pass a charter provision on woman suffrage and that they had decided to ask instead that the convention submit a separate bill for

⁸⁷Charter Convention, Proceedings, December 4, 1906, p. 131-32.

⁸⁸Ibid., December 27, 1906, p. 767-72, 776, and 778.

suffrage to the legislature.⁸⁹ The convention however refused to do even this, saying it preferred that the state take all initiative in this matter. On the issue of woman suffrage, therefore, the charter convention chose to ignore the desires of many Chicago women and voted on the basis of their personal preferences, and prejudices, against giving women political power. Louis Post castigated his fellow delegates for their callous treatment of women.⁹⁰

Liquor Regulation

Finally the convention had to confront the vexing question of liquor regulation. Not only was this a controversial issue throughout the city, it was also the one for which organized groups outside the convention put tremendous pressure on the delegates. When the convention adopted its statement acknowledging that the state conferred all powers of municipal government,⁹¹ the United Societies accelerated its campaign to have some explicit home rule provision on liquor regulation inserted into the charter.

First the Societies worked to strengthen the resolve of its existing membership. It sent a letter to all member societies attacking the state liquor laws as an affront to popular democracy and proclaiming that the organization was "strong enough and entitled to take its place in politics, to stand united and not be put off with poor excuses, and

⁸⁹Catherine W. McCullough to Raymond Robins, January 8 and January 14, 1907, Raymond Robins Papers.

⁹⁰Charter Convention, Proceedings, February 16, 1907; the Public January 5, 1907.

⁹¹See above, p. 101.

carry to the end a campaign against a dishonest and dependent minority."⁹² The Societies then began issuing a bulletin to inform its membership of the important aspects of the liquor regulation question and to enable them to follow the debate and events of the convention on the issue.⁹² Secondly, the Societies actively publicized its position throughout the city, hoping to gain new support from ethnic groups and perhaps other groups, who could in turn help pressure the convention. In this effort the Societies succeeded. The CFL leadership, observing that Sunday was the only day on which workers could "relax, enjoy themselves, and recover from their arduous weekly labors," urged workers to join the United Societies in their efforts to insure that saloons and other places of entertainment were not closed on Sundays.⁹³

The Societies also succeeded in attracting more ethnic support. The Bohemian societies of Chicago held a mass meeting just before Christmas to apprise Bohemians all over the city of the work of the United Societies and the danger of liquor restriction. Speakers at this meeting contended that the general state law under which Sunday closings was being threatened was so vague that it could be used to ban theatres, the running of street cars, and the publishing and selling of newspapers. They further argued that such a law was hopelessly out of touch with urban life. The gathering passed a resolution declaring that the "so-called blue laws" were too obsolete and undemocratic to be applied in a cosmopolitan city, and had copies sent to the charter convention and to the United Societies. The Bohemians also passed a resolution asking

⁹²Abendpost, December 3, 1906.

⁹³CFL, Minutes, December 16, 1906; Abendpost, December 17, 1906.

the convention to rescind the rule which barred non-members from the convention floor and allow a delegation from the United Societies to take the floor and present its arguments. The Abendpost reported that additional societies joining the United Societies after this meeting boosted the number of affiliated Bohemian societies to 120 with an approximate membership of 20,000.⁹⁴

The Societies took the support they received as evidence that the majority of Chicagoans wanted the city freed from Sunday closing and any other state law designed to restrict or prohibit the sale of liquor. The organization again warned the convention that only a specific home rule provision in the charter could guarantee popular sovereignty on this issue, without which its membership would not support any new charter.⁹⁵ The temperance forces agreed with the Societies' assessment of municipal sentiment on this issue, and for this reason urged the delegates to keep any home rule on liquor out of the charter. The Law and Order League argued that only the state laws prevented Chicago from eliminating prohibition districts, as well as licensing prostitution and race track gambling and exempting itself "from numerous other provisions of the Criminal Code." In a letter to Raymond Robins a League spokesman warned that Chicago needed the protection of state laws to avoid being handed over to the forces of vice and corruption and he laid the

⁹⁴Abendpost, December 24, 1906; United Societies for Local Self-Government, Home Rule Bulletin 3 (January 5, 1907). One English language newspaper also covered this meeting but inaccurately identified it as one called by the United Societies. In general, the English press tended to make serious errors when reporting the events of the city's ethnic groups, and often neglected major events altogether. See Record-Herald, December 24, 1906.

⁹⁵Charter Convention, Proceedings, December 26, 1906, p. 712-13.

blame squarely on the city's large immigrant population. In another twenty-five years, he explained, when "our foreign increment has been digested," the situation might be different. For now he urged Robins to see the wisdom of allowing "the more conservative and more American sentiment of the country to help us out rather than to leave the whole matter to the population of Chicago."⁹⁶ It was reasoning such as this which convinced the United Societies that the temperance movement was an assault by the minority on the lifestyle and character of the majority. And they deeply resented the equating of liquor with criminal activities of all sorts and with "unAmericanism."

The Societies received unexpected support on this issue from convention member Alexander Revell. Revell, a wealthy Republican furniture manufacturer, was not associated with the Societies, nor did he have much in common with its membership. But in a lengthy speech to the convention he argued that a true home rule charter must include the problem of liquor regulation.⁹⁷

Then the people of Chicago can decide whether they want Sunday saloons or not. And it is the people's right, in a land of popular government, to have such laws as they desire....We cannot go before the world with the announcement that the people of Chicago cannot be trusted to govern themselves. Such a policy and such a declaration would invite disaster and contempt.

Revell was arguing that the right to popular government was the deeply rooted principle, and that to use the law to regulate personal habits was to misuse law and invite contempt for it.

⁹⁶Robert McCurdy to Raymond Robins, December 3, 1906, Raymond Robins Papers.

⁹⁷Charter Convention, Proceedings, December 27, 1906, p. 786-90; United Societies, Home Rule Bulletin 3.

It is difficult to ascertain from the sparse convention debate exactly what individual delegates thought about this issue. They did not want to deny the validity of the arguments advanced by the United Societies or Revell; the strongest opposing argument advanced was that the issue did not properly belong in the charter because people would use it as their sole reason for voting for or against the entire charter.⁹⁸ The delegates had very little else to say about this question and it seems obvious that they were caught between the demands of the United Societies, those of the Anti-Saloon and Law and Order Leagues, and their personal predilections. The solution they arrived at was to frame a separate bill, which, if accepted by the state legislature, would Chicago voters to decide whether the city should have sole power to regulate liquor. The Societies accepted this compromise because it believed that the majority of Chicagoans would quickly enact such a law.

The compromise measure on liquor regulation concluded the drafting of the charter and the convention adjourned until mid-February when it reconvened to reconsider some of the more disputed items. On March 1, 1907, the convention met for its final session to conduct a vote on accepting the proposed charter as written. While the majority of the delegates were quite pleased with their efforts, several of them voiced objections to the charter as written and the discussions over accepting the charter portended a difficult future for it. Most of the delegates continued to believe that the majority of the citizens would accept the

⁹⁸ Charter Convention, Proceedings, December 27, 1906, p. 790, and 792-93.

charter even if they disagreed with some of its provisions. Charles Merriam spoke of compromise and principle; he declared that he never thought beforehand that he would agree with everything included in the charter, but that what was most important was that Chicago indeed have this charter. "Mr. Cole and I," said Merriam, "agreed to pledge ourselves, if the other gentlemen would do likewise, to accept this charter from this convention. I do not see how a man can act on principle and do otherwise."⁹⁹

Louis Post dissented, both from Merriam's speech and from accepting the charter.¹⁰⁰

Unlike Mr. Merriam, I did not come into this convention with any determination to be absolutely governed by its decisions. If it had been a representative convention, elected by the people... and I had been selected to sit in it, then I should have considered that whatever conclusions that convention came to, I should fall in with the rest of the members. I did come, however...with the full determination, that if the members, even though appointed instead of elected, should formulate a home rule charter, a fair and good charter, that even if I did not like it in many respects, I would support it.

But, Post concluded it was not a home rule charter and it violated many of the desires of groups outside of the convention, and he refused to vote to accept the proposed charter.

Perhaps even more ominous for the charter's fate, seven of the nine convention members who were also state legislators attending the final session declined also to vote for the charter, saying they reserved the right to vote for changes when the legislature considered the charter. Delegate Jones resurrected all the fears which various groups in the city

⁹⁹ Ibid., March 1, 1907, p. 1193-94.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 1194.

had of downstate when he declared himself open to accept changes suggested by downstate legislators. "If the country members of the Legislature were able to prevail upon my judgment, that some of the Provisions of the Charter...were erroneous, founded upon wrong principles, then I would vote in favor of change."¹⁰¹ Nothing could more anger several groups in Chicago than the prospect of the state legislature--those "country members"--revising the charter with Chicago representatives going along and voting against the wishes of the people they represented.

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 1199.

CHAPTER VI

THE CAMPAIGN TO RATIFY THE CHARTER

I

Even after the convention had sent the proposed charter and liquor bills to the General Assembly in Springfield, the issue remained important enough to Chicagoans to influence the mayoral contest in early April of 1907. This election was particularly important because the new mayor would be the first to serve a four year term and both parties worked hard to win. The Democrats renominated Mayor Dunne who had been very popular with Chicago's ethnic community two years earlier but ethnic support for Dunne had waned after he tried to enforce some of the state liquor laws in early 1906--the incident which had prompted the organizing of the United Societies. The Republicans, hoping to attract more ethnic voters, chose Fred Busse, the "boss" of the north side. Busse was a German and he promised to go to Springfield and fight for passage of the liquor bills. The German press endorsed Busse as the friend of the United Societies,¹ and this support combined with that of Chicagoans who opposed Dunne's radical stand on municipal ownership elected Busse. The new mayor publicly thanked the United Societies for its support and immediately left for Springfield.²

¹Abendpost, April 1, 1907.

²Ibid., April 3, 1907

Other groups from the city also sent representatives to lobby for their interests: a delegation from the charter convention and other civic and business groups pleaded for the unamended passage of the charter bill; and the United Societies worked to persuade the legislators to ratify the liquor regulation bills. But it soon became clear to these people that the state legislature had its own ideas about acceptable legislation for Chicago. Downstate legislators, with the vehement support of their constituents who railed against Chicago's contemptible attitude toward liquor laws, were determined to keep the city under the jurisdiction of general state laws, particularly those on liquor regulation. The House charter committee immediately recommended against passing the proposed liquor bills, which were tabled without discussion. Representative McGoorty from Chicago moved that the bills be reconsidered but his motion was beaten decisively.³ Furthermore, the downstaters demanded some concessions from Chicago in return for ratification of the charter. As one student of Chicago-downstate relations put it, downstate legislators "looked upon the Chicago charter as a form of gift which should be traded for some other measure more desired by the country people."⁴ As they had done before, the Senators first tried to trade the charter for a plan to restrict permanently the number of representatives from Cook County, but they could not get the two-thirds vote needed for this measure. The votes were cast along strict regional lines; of the eighteen negative votes, fourteen came from Chicago and one was from

³Illinois, House Journal, May 2, 1907; Philip, p. 174-75.

⁴Philip, p. 158.

Cook County;⁵ Chicago wanted a new charter but not at such a high cost. Having failed to get restricted representation the downstaters resolutely demanded that Chicago's representatives support a state-wide local-option bill or see the charter fail to pass the legislature. Believing they now had no choice if Chicago was to get the badly needed new charter, the Chicago legislators either abstained or voted for the local-option bill which passed both houses.⁶

Acquiescence on the local-option bill did not guarantee Chicago that the legislature would pass the charter in its original form.⁷ Claiming that electoral procedure was a state matter, the legislature eliminated the direct primary method for nominating municipal candidates, one of the most widely-supported reform measures of the charter, and restored the old system of nomination by ward convention. Although the legislature promised that it would soon implement the direct primary throughout the state--the General Assembly did enact such a law in 1910--many Chicagoans were skeptical and saw this move as further evidence that the state could not be trusted not to interfere in local affairs. The legislature also stripped the Council of the power to impose license taxes on all persons, firms, or corporations holding franchises from the city thereby reducing potential revenue and emphasizing that all authority to institute taxes lay with the state.

⁵Ibid., p. 62.

⁶Ibid., p. 270-72.

⁷The original charter as passed by the convention, and the final version as amended by the legislature can be found in the Charter Convention Proceedings, Municipal Reference Library, Chicago, Illinois. The final version is also printed in Illinois, Senate Journal, 1907, p. 1079-1160.

A final modification to the charter demonstrated both the state legislature's absolute determination to maintain sovereignty over the city and Chicago's vulnerableness to state and party politics: the legislators altered Chicago's ward system. Instead of seventy wards with one alderman each the city was reduced to fifty wards and fifty aldermen, a system specifically rejected earlier by the charter convention. In the process the legislature flagrantly gerrymandered wards along political and class lines. Working-class Democratic areas of the city were districted into wards with two and three times the population of middle and upper-class Republican wards. Several of Chicago's representatives protested vigorously but their colleagues, particularly in the Senate, remained intransigent and the Chicago men faced choosing between an amended charter or no charter at all. They chose the former alternative and in early May the charter was ratified by the legislature with most of the dissenting votes cast by downstate legislators unhappy about giving the charter to Chicago without exacting more in return.

The charter was returned to Chicago where a city-wide referendum was scheduled for September 17. The state legislature's conduct on this issue, and the changes it made to the charter, played a significant role in the subsequent charter ratification campaign.

II

As soon as the legislature returned the amended charter Chicagoans began to declare for and against. Civic, reform and business groups generally favored the charter because consolidation, the revised tax system, and a modicum of home rule promised greater fiscal and administrative efficiency for the city. Other supporters liked the charter

because it satisfied their special interests: the Republican party stood to benefit from the gerrymandered wards; and the Anti-Saloon League believed Sunday closings, and possibly total prohibition, could be effected because the city would be inextricably bound to general state laws under the charter.

The United Societies and the CFL quickly emerged as the leading opponents of the charter. Having secured absolutely no guarantee of home rule on liquor regulation the Societies opposed the charter for precisely the same reasons as the Anti-Saloon League backed it. Further, the charter's lack of substantial home rule and popular democratic reforms disturbed the Societies which neither trusted the motives and actions of the state legislature nor those of reformers touting less voter participation as the means to more efficient municipal government. The CFL thought the charter virtually devoid of popular democratic reforms and meaningful home rule also, and completely unfavorable to the city's working-class; labor particularly objected to the provisions on the education system and taxation.

Radical reformers, social reformers, the Democratic party, the Independence League, and many women joined the Societies and CFL in attacking the charter. The failure to grant municipal suffrage angered women; the Democratic party would be hurt by the ward gerrymander and in general the charter seemed unfair to its working-class constituency; the Independence League believed the tax reforms were designed to benefit the rich and the corporations while radical reformers such as Louis Post predicted that the whole charter would hand the city government over to the "Real Estate Board, the Merchants' Club, and the Cook County

Republicans."⁸ Finally, the more socially-conscious reformers like Raymond Robins objected to the charter's paucity of meaningful social benefits.

Many of the reasons advanced during the charter campaign for opposing or supporting the charter sound like the complaints of special interest groups, and to an extent they were. The Anti-Saloon League wanted prohibition and the United Societies wanted drinking on Sundays; the Republican and Democratic parties were engaged in partisan politics. But to dismiss these reasons as irrelevant and subsidiary to charter reform, as did many contemporaries and those who later studied Chicago history, is to misread critically Chicago's charter reform movement. Most Chicagoans fully understood that the proposed charter would alter significantly their municipal government. The referendum therefore provided them the opportunity to try to implement the kind of government and urban environment they desired. Their arguments and activities during the charter campaign reveal the differing ways in which they hoped to reform Chicago.

A debate sponsored by the City Club in mid-June is a good point to begin exploring these differing ideas. Milton Foreman, Republican alderman and chairman of the charter convention, flatly denied that the state legislature had made any significant changes to the charter and asserted that "every feature of the charter that Chicago really wants... is in the charter."⁹ That the legislature had redistricted and reduced

⁸The Public, January 5, 1907.

⁹City Club of Chicago, The City Club Bulletin 13 (June 19, 1907), p. 147.

the wards and eliminated the direct primary, and that the proposed charter conferred strictly limited home rule bothered Foreman not at all. . The provisions designed to make government more efficient by consolidating overlapping authorities, increasing the city's taxing powers, and locating almost all municipal responsibility in the City Council remained intact and these were what interested Foreman.

Edward Noonan, representing the United Societies, presented a view of the charter which differed significantly from Foreman's. Persuaded by the events in Springfield that neither Chicago politicians nor the charter convention understood what the majority of Chicagoans wanted, the Societies had voted to oppose the charter at its second annual convention on May 26, 1907. The threat of prohibition of course remained a primary reason for opposing the charter: convention speakers predicted that the proposed charter would subject all athletic, singing, social, and benevolent societies to state saloon and special license laws as well as close all saloons on Sundays; they accused the Anti-Saloon League of helping tie the charter to the local-option bill and defeat the separate liquor bills; and they warned that the League was supporting the charter as a victory in the cause of state-wide prohibition.¹⁰ This was not simply paranoia on the part of the Societies for the Anti-Saloon League was in fact proclaiming these very things.¹¹ But in an important broadening of the Societies' position, several speakers protested that the new form of municipal government--which Foreman was extolling--benefitted the state, the corporations, and the wealthy of the city while it

¹⁰ Abendpost, May 27, 1907.

¹¹ J.C. Jackson, "The Work of the Anti-Saloon League," The Annals 32 (1908), p. 485.

placed a disproportionate burden of the new taxes on the small property owner and taxpayer, reduced the equality of representation in the City Council, and failed to grant Chicago adequate home rule.¹²

Feeling as strongly as they did, the members of the United Societies did not intend to allow the charter to be ratified without a fight. They resolved to show the ethnic strength to the rest of the city by vigorously campaigning against the charter and to this end constituted an anti-charter campaign committee. Speakers called upon the membership to remember that the "world belongs to the strong" and by standing firm and united by themselves they could make the rest of the city pay attention to what they wanted. An editorial in the Abendpost warned Chicago that this meeting would have profound significance for the city's political development, and the Societies went to work to defeat the charter.¹³

Noonan explained the Societies' reasons for opposing the charter to the City Club. First of all he emphatically denied accusations that the Societies opposed the charter solely because it failed to provide home rule on liquor regulation.¹⁴ Rather the charter's gravest fault was that it did not free Chicago from the dictates of a rural legislature—a body which had recently shown its contempt for the city by arbitrarily revising its ward system. Instead of home rule, the charter gave the City Council a few new powers in exchange for de facto recognition

¹² Abendpost, May 27, 1907.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ This charge had been leveled against the United Societies in an editorial in the Record-Herald, May 28, 1907.

of the state's ultimate authority over the city.¹⁵ Noonan further reminded his audience that the charter directly contravened the wishes of a majority of the city's voters. In public policy referenda held from 1904 to 1907 Chicagoans had favored instituting direct primaries, electing members of the Board of Education, allowing local citizens to determine and adopt their own system of assessing and levying taxes, and other measures designed to increase home rule and make local government more directly responsible to the citizens.¹⁶ The charter provided none of these, and in the case of direct primaries the legislature had actually deleted this from the charter.

The third participant in the debate was Charles Merriam, a professor of political science at the University of Chicago and a delegate to the charter convention. Merriam favored adopting the charter but was more perceptive than Foreman in recognizing and admitting the document's shortcomings. He regretted that the legislature had eliminated direct primaries, redistricted the wards, and in other ways altered the charter, but he maintained that "the fundamental difficulty with American city governments and with the government of Chicago has not been the lack of such statutes...[the] greatest troubles in city government have been the lack of adequate power, and the lack of unity and responsibility."¹⁷ The proposed charter, Merriam believed, rectified these shortcomings. Unlike the United Societies Merriam believed also that the charter conferred

¹⁵City Club, Bulletin 13, p. 153-56.

¹⁶See Daily News, Almanac (1905-1908).

¹⁷City Club, Bulletin 13, p. 152. Merriam's speech was reprinted in The Voter (July 1907), p. 24-32.

enough home rule and that "in granting broad powers of local government and in unifying the local governments, so that responsibility cannot be evaded, it lays a foundation for efficient democratic government."¹⁸

For Merriam and other charter supporters efficiency in municipal government led axiomatically to democratic municipal government; or in Merriam's words "given ample power, clear responsibility and local control, and democracy will obtain results."¹⁹ Merriam urged his audience to support the charter because it delineated the clearer lines of municipal power and responsibility necessary to assure efficient, and hence democratic government. The members of the United Societies disagreed; to them, fundamental American democracy required direct citizen participation in decision-making and because the charter failed to provide this it violated their vision of democratic municipal government.

This fundamental disagreement about municipal democracy was one of the prominent issues as the charter campaign proceeded into the summer. The CFL had not been invited to the City Club debate but the organization was definitely leaning toward opposing the charter. The CFL

¹⁸City Club, Bulletin 13, p. 149

¹⁹Ibid. For comparable ideas see Chicago City Club, Civic Committee Reports 1 and 2 (1907); Chicago Civic Federation, The New Charter: Why It Should Be Adopted at the Special Election, September 17th (1907); Walter L. Fisher to M.H. Lebensohn, September 14, 1907, Walter L. Fisher Papers.

Merriam's ideas are similar to those of reformers in other cities, whom Martin Schiesl found equated democracy with efficiency. They believed that democracy was less a system to insure individual participation in decision-making, and more a method of making decisions which insured efficiency, while requiring some measure of responsiveness to public opinion. The Politics of Efficiency, p. 73-75 and 149-50.

set up a special committee to study all aspects of the charter and convene a conference composed of one representative from each union local to recommend a course of action to the membership, and promised to keep the membership informed through the monthly journal, the Union Labor Advocate, and their individual unions.

The convention's rejection of its proposals on initiative, referendum, and the school system had angered the CFL and the legislature's changes only deepened this anger. Consequently the special committee decisively recommended that the CFL oppose the charter. The revenue provisions, it said, were designed to increase the tax burdens of the renter and small property owner instead of formulating a system to compel the corporations and wealthy to pay their fair share of taxes; the ward gerrymander would hurt the working-class representation on the City Council while the lengthening of aldermanic terms to four years would remove elected officials further from the people and give them more time to indulge in graft; the "progressive" reforms of initiative and direct primary which were being instituted throughout the country were missing; and the charter failed to implement municipal ownership.²⁰

That the charter would benefit only certain groups within the city, the CFL was certain. It warned workers that "all the predatory, tax-dodging, labor baiting interests...who fear the rule by the whole people [and] seek to curb the power of the electorate" supported the charter because they could use several of its provisions to control labor better.²¹

²⁰CFL, Minutes, July 21, 1907. The committee's recommendations were also printed in the Union Labor Advocate (August 1907).

²¹Ibid.

For example, the city's enhanced police powers to arrest and detain people for disturbing the peace could easily be used to break up political or labor rallies and against strikers. Even more pernicious, the CFL feared, was the provision authorizing the city to examine and license workers. Without such a license they could not work and the CFL thought it possible that the licenses could be withheld or taken away on any pretext including striking.²² Summing up the charter as containing

nothing that will give the people better control of their own affairs,--nothing in the interest of democratic government,--nothing to preserve the liberties of the people against the encroachments of concentrated wealth and plutocratic greed.... it is an insidious attempt to dress Chicago in a corporate strait jacket and to bind labor to the chariot wheel of a power mad plutocracy.

the CFL declared an all-out campaign to insure that no union man be left unaware of the dangers posed by the charter.²³

The CFL's class fears and its vision of municipal democracy are perhaps best exemplified by the controversy over the charter provisions on the public schools. The convention had chosen to stress fiscal and administrative efficiency as demanded by the business community by creating a strong superintendent with control of both the educational and administrative apparatus of the system and an appointed board which served at the mayor's pleasure. These provisions were largely in accord with the views of the City Club which in April 1907 had instructed its Committee on Public Education to continue seeking remedies which would "secure more effective business administration and an education...more

²²This issue provides an interesting example of new urban problems which were not satisfied by an old catch-all incorporation act designed for much smaller cities and towns.

²³CFL, Minutes, July 21, 1907; Union Labor Advocate (August 1907).

in accordance with the demands of modern social and business conditions."²⁴ Yet the CFL (as well as others in the city) wanted the citizens to have a greater say in how their children were being educated. In order to accomplish this the CFL had proposed that the charter provide an elected and paid school board and give this board and the teachers more power and authority in the system than the superintendent. Mayor Busse's removal of the more liberal board appointees of former Mayor Dunne—including two members of the CFL, and Raymond Robins and Louis Post, both of whom had supported the CFL proposals in the convention—soon after his election only strengthened the convictions of the CFL.

The Chicago Federation of Teachers, which was affiliated with but not an official member of the CFL, led labor's opposition to the charter's educational provisions. The largely female constituency of the Federation protested the position of the teachers in the system. While the Superintendent and regular board employees were amply protected against arbitrary removal, teachers were specifically exempted from Civil Service and decisions about their retention, promotion, and transfer given over to the Superintendent; and the charter contained no guarantee of any salary stability for teachers. Finally the teachers protested that repudiating an elected school board and giving the Superintendent, with advice from the Board, all power to decide educational programs and curriculum destroyed all hope of democratic participation by the citizens or teachers in their school system.²⁵ The leadership of the CFT author-

²⁴City Club of Chicago, Civic Committee Report 1 (1906-1907), p. 34.

²⁵Chicago American, June 16, 1907.

ized a committee of 250 to work with the woman suffrage organizations in the city to defeat the charter and, because they would not be able to vote on the charter, asked the CFL members to vote in their interest.

The CFL hardly needed persuading on this issue. The special charter committee agreed wholeheartedly that the school system proposed by the charter was undemocratic to both the people in general and the teachers. The primary question, the CFL told its members, was whether the schools should be managed "by the people for their children or by the financial interests." It accused business of using the charter to make the public schools "a cog in the capitalistic machine so that the children may reach manhood's estate, content in a condition of abject servitude" and of trying to thwart teacher allegiance with the CFL by leaving them subject to arbitrary dismissal.²⁶ The CFL clearly envisioned a school system in which a strong Superintendent, undoubtedly hand-picked by the rich and powerful of the city--whose children did not attend the public schools--held the power to determine the curriculum, textbooks, administrators, and the financial arrangements of the schools with little control by the school board, teachers, or parents. Lest this happen, all workingmen were urged to vote against the charter. To augment the anti-charter campaign being conducted through the Union Labor Advocate the CFL also began sending speakers out to all union locals.

The Civic Federation responded to the criticism of the charter by the United Societies and CFL in a pamphlet explaining why Chicagoans

²⁶CFL, Minutes, July 21 and August 4, 1907; Union Labor Advocate (August 1907), p. 11.

should ratify the charter; this pamphlet stressed the themes of efficiency and economy which charter supporters made the cornerstone of their ratification campaign. Dismissing all criticism as selfish, blatantly political, or "uttered by persons of unsafe theories and principles," the Federation characterized charges that the charter was plutocratic and framed in the interest of the corporations as "such as might be expected from socialist newspapers and socialist street corner harangues..."²⁷ Having thus linked all opposition with radicalism the Federation then extolled the fiscal and administrative efficiency promised by the charter's revisions to the city's revenue system. More revenue, extended borrowing power, and centralized tax assessments and levies would be conducive to greater efficiency and economy in administration and would give Chicago the ability to undertake the municipal improvements it desperately needed. Such improvements, the Federation argued, "will make the city a better and more desirable place in which to live and do business and consequently enhance property values."²⁸ The Civic Federation did not address in their pamphlet the issues of popular democracy which so concerned the United Societies and CFL, except to urge that people not reject the charter simply because it did not include the direct primary or because the wards had been redistricted by the state legislature.

The basic dichotomy between the Civic Federation and the ethnic groups and workers of the United Societies and the CFL on the important

²⁷Civic Federation of Chicago, *The New Chicago Charter: Why It Should Be Adopted at the Special Election September 17th (1907)*, p. 2 and 11.

²⁸Ibid., p. 1-2.

question of home rule was also revealed in this pamphlet. While the latter groups argued that the new charter did not remove the state legislature's ability to interfere in municipal affairs, the Federation believed that home rule was simply synonymous with the consolidation of governing and taxing bodies. It acknowledged that the city would not be allowed to change any of the charter provisions on revenue, public schools, public utilities, and others, but proclaimed this a home rule charter because it centralized in the City Council the power to pass ordinances on all other municipal matters.²⁹

Revenue was so crucial an issue to the supporters of the charter that once the charter passed the legislature they sought to strengthen their position by backing a move by downstate legislators to repeal the Juul Law which set the ceiling on tax rates. While downstaters had their own purposes in mind for removing the tax ceiling, some Chicago charter advocates saw how this might work to their advantage and hence were distressed when Governor Deneen threatened to veto this repeal. Walter Fisher apointed out to Deneen that as long as the old limit remained, those who opposed the charter's new revenue system could urge voters to stick with a tax system they already knew. Without this safeguard however they would have to choose between the "very definite and fair-minded limitations" set by the new charter or put themselves at the mercy of future laws enacted by the General Assembly.³⁰ Frank Shepard further argued with Deneen that the repeal of the Law was necessary in

²⁹Ibid., p. 9.

³⁰Walter L. Fisher to Governor Deneen, May 16, 1907, Walter L. Fisher Papers.

case the charter failed. In that event, Chicago would at least have the possibility of securing the same kind of tax reforms through the legislature. Deneen rejected these appeals and vetoed the measure and charter supporters turned their attention to convincing Chicago voters that they had little to lose and much to gain by ratifying the charter.

Throughout the summer charter supporters participated in debates at the City Club, gave speeches, and wrote articles stressing the benefits of the proposed revenue changes. Although the City Club held debates ostensibly to discuss all sides of the issues, in the main these tended to be forums for promoting the charter for few anti-charter speakers appeared. When Frank Shepard and Frank Bennett praised the advantages of the proposed revenue changes, for instance, there was no speaker presenting the opposing view.

It was obvious from their arguments that Bennett and Shepard were appealing to a specific audience—large property owners and businessmen. Bennett spoke of how Chicago needed more money to be a greater and better Chicago but vowed that the per capita tax increase would be minimal because the new monies would result primarily from the consolidation scheme. Shepard seconded this assertion and reminded the audience that taxpayers would be protected by the conservative limiting of the total tax rate to five percent of assessed property valuation. Nathan W. MacChesney, attorney for the Real Estate Board, advanced the only negative note. He told the audience that the men he represented were upset by the charter's failure to eliminate the special assessment tax but he also emphasized that despite this flaw the overall charter was so good that he was sure it would be supported wholeheartedly by the realtors of

the city.³¹ In closing his speech Shepard urged his listeners to approve the charter.³²

It means...greater resources through bond issues for permanent improvements for the city. It means a definite, precise and permanent, and at the same time conservative tax limitation for the taxpayer, a limitation calculated to encourage prospective investors in homes and in property in this community, instead of driving them, as the present uncertain tax rate must tend to do, out of the community to invest their property elsewhere.

Charles Merriam, on the other hand, sought in a series of articles appearing in the Record-Herald to assure people that all would benefit practically and democratically from the new revenue system. Merriam pointed out that under the charter all new municipal bond proposals would be submitted to a popular referendum, whereas currently citizens had little control over bond issuances. According to Merriam, the new system enhanced home rule because it gave the municipal government control of the entire debt unlike the present system where, for example, the state controlled the bonded indebtedness of the park system.³³ Few other people in the city however shared Merriam's ideas on this issue.

III

By mid-summer differences between charter supporters and opponents had manifested themselves quite clearly. The former were largely wealthy businessmen and prominent professionals; they were Republicans and generally members of prestigious clubs and civic organizations. These men formed a committee of 300 to coordinate the charter campaign

³¹City Club, Bulletin 14 (June 20, 1907), p. 157-63.

³²Ibid., p. 161.

³³Record-Herald, July 3, 1907.

and its Committee on Oratory which was to "look after the aggressive part of the campaign" was composed deliberately of representatives from the Union League and Hamilton Clubs, the Real Estate Board, the Manufacturers' Association, and the Chamber of Commerce.³⁴ While claiming to be non-partisan and seeking only what was best for the entire city and its future, in reality they sought an efficient municipal government most beneficial to their economic, social, and political needs.

The city's three most prestigious newspapers solidly backed the charter. The Tribune represented the conservative Republican opinion while the Daily News and Record-Herald styled themselves as the spokesmen of the liberal Republican or independent-minded good government reformers. All three papers actively promoted the proposed charter, reporting on pro-charter gatherings, events, and speeches and publishing articles explaining why it should be ratified. Charles Merriam wrote a series of such articles for both the Daily News and Record-Herald while the Tribune ran a series by convention member Alexander Revell. The Tribune backed the charter so ardently that Raymond Robins lambasted the paper for being in league with "the brutal bosses in Chicago politics and the big thieves in Chicago business."³⁵ Their opponents accused the Tribune and Daily News of standing to profit financially from the charter; both papers held long-term, low-rent leases on some Board of Education property and the charter allowed the Board to continue its practice of granting ninety-nine year leases.

³⁴Undated, unnamed newspaper clipping in Raymond Robins papers.

³⁵American, July 19, 1907.

A broader spectrum of the city's social and economic groups opposed the charter; they tended to be drawn largely from the working-class and ethnic population but they included middle-class professionals, and they all attacked the charter's lack of democracy and the privileges it bestowed upon the few. They rejected both the supporters' claims to non-partisanship and their vision of the city.

Several of the remaining daily newspapers opposed the charter. William Randolph Hearst owned the Chicago American and Sunday Examiner. The Chicago branch of Hearst's political organization, the Independence League, was violently anti-charter and the newspaper produced a steady stream of vitriolic editorials. It also sympathized with the United Societies and prominently announced all anti-charter activities throughout the summer. The Chicago Journal adopted a more subdued approach; until mid-September the paper confined itself to pointing out the charter's defects and then urging the citizens to vote no because the new tax and ward schemes would only benefit the corrupt political bosses. The Journal skeptically predicted that increased taxation would not result in more funds for badly needed municipal services, as charter advocates touted, but in "new vistas of riotous expenditures...[by] jobbing politicians, leagued with dishonest contractors."³⁶ The Inter-Ocean, published by traction magnate Charles Yerkes, opposed the charter because it opposed charter reform per se. One can only be cynical about the paper's stance that only the character of the men elected to office mattered, not any kind of structural reform. Yerkes after all had profited quite nicely from the current system and its public officials.

³⁶Chicago Journal, September 13, 1907.

The charter's fiscal provisions particularly incensed the Independence League. Its members, although primarily lawyers, had neither the wealth nor the prestige of the professionals who had sponsored the charter reform, attended the convention, and were now backing the charter. The League accused these men of conspiring with big business to design a charter from which they would benefit politically and economically while higher taxes "would fasten a yoke around the necks of the people which they could never shake off."³⁷

The League was able to keep its anti-charter activities constantly before the public because of its connection with the American; managing editor A.M. Lawrence was one of the organization's leading figures. The League and the American attacked the special privilege character of the charter, charging that it sanctioned the corporate tax-dodging that was responsible for the current lack of money to provide municipal services: "If the taxing bodies did their duty," declared the League, "there would be enough and millions to spare."³⁸ They accused International Harvester of dodging \$2.1 million in taxes--enough to "educate 75,000 children, or raise firemen's pay, clean streets, open parks, build more public baths, pay policemen more"--and declared that the "kings of Pack- ingtown, convicted of a thousand offenses against the public from whom they derive their revenue run a close race with the International Harvester gang of tax-dodgers..."³⁹

³⁷ American, August 7, 1907. See Appendix V.

³⁸ Ibid., July 5, 1907.

³⁹ Ibid., July 4 and July 5, 1907.

To support their contentions of corporate pressure behind the charter, the American reported campaign chairman Milton Foreman calling for business to raise at least \$100,000 to fight for the charter. The paper further quoted him as saying "it would be cheaper for the corporations to put up \$50 million than suffer a constitutional convention."⁴⁰ There is no way of ascertaining the validity of this quote; nevertheless its printing in a daily newspaper helped fuel the suspicions of those already inclined to expect the worst from big business and the charter supporters.

Two of the more radical former convention delegates Louis Post and Raymond Robins believed that Chicago deserved and could get better municipal reform and they worked hard against the charter. Post followed up his attack on the charter at the final meeting of the convention with more criticism in his newspaper, the Public. He assailed the charter as "a charter by politicians and corporations for politicians and corporations."⁴¹ He charged that the document had resulted from the fraudulent and prejudiced selection of the delegates--by his calculations at least fifty of his seventy-three fellow convention members had represented the Republicans, corporations, and large property owners--and the interference of the state legislature. He continued to protest, as he had done during the convention, the charter's unfair tax provisions, its school system, and its lack of municipal ownership.

⁴⁰Chicago Sunday Examiner, July 7, 1907. The CFL and other groups in the city were already demanding a new constitution to give local governments complete control of their revenue and tax systems, presumably to alter these systems to the detriment of the wealthy and the corporations.

⁴¹The Public, May 18, 1907.

Robins agreed with Post that the convention and legislature had combined to produce a seriously flawed charter. He charged that the convention had been chosen by the same corrupt and incompetent officials the people had been railing against and that the legislature had eliminated all of the provisions which had been forced into the charter by the independent-minded convention delegates.⁴² It genuinely distressed Robins that the result of this selfish maneuvering, as he saw it, was so unfair to and uncaring about the majority of the people. Sitting in the convention and on the Board of Education had convinced him that children could not receive a decent education because the city's powerful and influential citizens were more interested in fiscal accountability and securing good business deals for themselves when leasing school property than in the schools providing a good education. Robins firmly believed the problem was one of class in which the children of the working-class who made up the bulk of the public school population would continue to be shortchanged until the citizens and teachers had a greater voice in the schools. Nothing that he could see in the proposed charter moved the schools in this direction.

Robins disliked much of the charter as written--the schools, taxation, limited home rule--and the legislative changes intensified his disapprobation. One change epitomized to him the struggle between a rich and powerful minority and the rest of the people. When, over the anguished cries about the sacredness of private property, he had persuaded the convention to empower the City Council to force landlords to

⁴²Public Policy League, Bulletin 1 (September 1907). This was a reprinting of a speech delivered by Robins to the Public Policy League in July 1907.

meet the municipal housing codes, Robins believed the city was taking a giant step toward municipal responsibility. Unfortunately the legislature thought the rights of property owners more important and struck this provision from the charter. By the time the charter came back from Springfield Robins could see little social or political benefit in it and he began an earnest campaign to defeat it as the "deformed product of political and business thieves."⁴³

The Democratic party and women also joined the anti-charter crusade. In early July the party finally decided after some in-fighting among the various factions, to organize its own anti-charter committee. William O'Connell, chairman of the Cook County Democratic Central Committee and former mayor Dunne became two of the leading spokesmen of the Committee which drew up a pamphlet on the "Reasons Why the Proposed Charter Should Be Defeated." These reasons closely resembled those of the United Societies and the CFL though with distinctly more emphasis on how the charter favored the "powerful Republican machine."⁴⁴

The women's groups which had petitioned the charter convention to include municipal suffrage for women continued their fight by opposing the charter. The Illinois Equal Suffrage Association, the Woman's Club, the Women's Trade Union League, and various civic improvement groups all complained they could neither protect themselves economically nor secure their social and civic ends without the vote.⁴⁵ Union member

⁴³American, July 19, 1907.

⁴⁴This pamphlet can be found in the Charles Merriam Papers, Box 72 folder 10, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois.

⁴⁵Chicago Inter-Ocean, September 9, 1907.

Elizabeth Maloney told a meeting of the Women's Trade Union League that if women did not help defeat the charter it might well be twenty years before they had another opportunity to attain suffrage. Women of all classes refused to wait that long. They increasingly thought of themselves as part of the community who were "not indifferent to Chicago's welfare," and they were demanding a more effective voice in the city's affairs both as just and as a necessity.⁴⁶

Finally, the activities of one more group are worth examining here, though no absolute conclusions can be drawn about its stance on the charter. The black community seems to have participated very little in the charter movement probably for the general reasons mentioned by Allen Spear in his book Black Chicago: first blacks mistrusted middle-class reformers and saw most progressive reforms as schemes to deprive them of what little political clout they had in the party bosses; and secondly no one had ever tried to include blacks in a reform coalition. Blacks were deeply afraid however that the charter convention might legally segregate the public schools and the Illinois Niagara Movement persuaded Mayor Dunne to appoint a black delegate, D.R. Wilkins, to present the case against segregation.⁴⁷ Other leaders in the black community wrote the convention asking it to support the anti-segregation provision which Wilkins had introduced. Black fears on this issue proved groundless as the convention easily passed the anti-segregation clause.⁴⁸

⁴⁶American, August 4, 1907.

⁴⁷Spear, p. 7, 86, and 121.

⁴⁸Charter Convention, Proceedings, December 26, 1906, p. 744, and December 28, p. 851.

Outside of this, the only evidence of black interest in the charter comes from the Broad-Ax, one of the community's two newspapers,⁴⁹ which consistently attacked the charter's economic implications for blacks. The tax provisions, declared the Broad-Ax, were designed to benefit the wealthy tax-dodgers at the expense of the small businessman, small property owner, and laboring man. The paper agreed with the Independence League's position that Chicago needed fairer tax collection, not higher taxes, and urged "all those who have not been born with a silver spoon in their mouth" to vote no.⁵⁰ Whether blacks heeded this admonition cannot be said: on the one hand they might well have followed the Republican party and voted in favor; on the other hand if they believed that most progressive reforms were economically and politically detrimental to blacks they might have voted against.⁵¹

The various groups opposing the charter never formed a united organization for planning common strategy and activities. Although the Independence League and Democratic party each proposed such a move, the leaders of the United Societies demurred.⁵² Since the Societies drew support from people with varying political allegiances, their leaders

⁴⁹The other newspaper, the Defender, began publishing in 1905 but copies are not extant until 1909.

⁵⁰The Broad-Ax, September 14, 1907.

⁵¹The bulk of the black community lived in the second and third wards which narrowly passed the charter. These wards however were respectively only sixteen percent and twenty-two percent black and the only way to discern the actual black vote would be to identify primarily black precincts, which I did not undertake for this project. Figuring out the black vote is complicated by the fact that the Broad-Ax was a Democratic paper and most blacks were Republicans.

⁵²Record-Herald, August 9, 1907; Abendpost, December 17, 1906; Illinois Staats-Zeitung, August 9, 1907.

claimed they did not want to link their cause with any political organization. A more important motive for rejecting the coalition, however, may have been the desire to show ethnic strength to the city by campaigning and defeating the charter largely on their own.

With its established and efficient organization, an overwhelming desire to crush the charter, and the potential to mobilize a large number of Chicago voters, the Societies in effect led the anti-charter movement. Immediately following its May convention in 1907 the Societies had begun working to defeat the charter. While sending Noonan to speak before the City Club conveyed its ideas to the civic reformers and charter supporters, the Societies knew that the real effort had to be made among the ethnic community and workers. To accomplish this it began distributing throughout the city pamphlets and circulars explaining its position, sending speakers to ethnic society meetings, arranging anti-charter rallies and speeches, and engaging in common activities with other groups opposing the charter. These facets of the Societies' anti-charter campaign reveal much about what ethnic groups wanted from their municipal government and how the charter not only failed to satisfy these desires but actually endangered them; they also reveal how the Societies' ideas and goals meshed with those of other groups in the city.

The Societies made its most comprehensive statement of objections to the charter in a pamphlet which it distributed throughout the city.⁵³ In this pamphlet the Societies rejected the specific provisions on self-government, schools, parks, taxation, public utilities, civil service,

⁵³United Societies for Local Self-Government, Seven Reasons to Vote Against the Charter (1907). Reprinted in Staats-Zeitung, August 1, 1907.

and ward redistricting. Taken together these objections show that the Societies opposed the charter for three fundamental reasons: it left the state too much control over municipal affairs; it failed to give the citizens enough popular control over their government; and it favored certain groups in the city at the expense of others.

Since the proposed charter neither ended Chicago's subordination to general state laws nor granted the city complete control of its municipal affairs, the Societies rejected any notion of its being a home rule document. Freedom from state laws had been a goal of the Societies since its inception for without this, Sunday closings and ultimately prohibition were distinct possibilities. After downstate legislators succeeded in passing a new state local-option law it hardly seemed the time to abandon the existing protections afforded by the Cities and Villages Act for a charter which explicitly acknowledged the superiority of state laws except those it directly contravened. The charter further violated the Societies' ideas of home rule and popular democracy by denying voters the right to revise certain provisions, among them taxation, public utilities, and schools, without going through the legislature. Not only would the state continue to legislate for the city, warned the pamphlet, it would also interfere in those areas which "directly touched the welfare and rights of Chicagoans." The redistricted ward system was simply further proof, as far as the Societies was concerned, that the legislature disdained local self-government and could not be trusted to act in Chicago's best interests.

Charter supporters believed that efficiency and economy would result from consolidating the governing bodies and centralizing decision-

making in the City Council. Exhibiting both a distrust of the Council and of centralization in general the Societies thought the true result of these measures would be severely curtailed popular control of government. For example, under the existing park system each of the three park boards controlled its local parks and many people thought that this decentralized system made each board more attentive to neighborhood needs. Now they were being asked to approve a system in which one park board shared power with the City Council over all park lands and the Societies dourly predicted in its pamphlet that giving the Council control of park property would probably result in the parks being sold away from the people without their consent.

The pamphlet most vigorously attacked the charter's tax provisions as distinctly unjust to the working people and small property owners. The Societies simply did not believe the claims being made by some of the charter's supporters that property tax increases resulting from the new fiscal system would be either minimal or equitably distributed. On the contrary, the Societies had no doubt that these changes would significantly raise property taxes, while failing to eliminate the special assessment taxes, and that this burden would fall disproportionately on those who could least afford it. Small landowners and landlords who had few assets other than real property would be hit hard by tax increases and would of course pass their higher costs on to their tenants while the "rich would conceal their assets in cash and bonds, and the powerful corporations would, as usual, avoid taxes."⁵⁴

⁵⁴Staats-Zeitung, August 1, 1907.

Behind all of the Societies' objections lay a profound distrust of the state legislature and a refusal to rely on its goodwill in any dealings with Chicago. This distrust was borne out by the activities of certain legislators, who thrust themselves into the campaign and threatened dire consequences if the charter failed. State Senator Orville Berry (Republican from Carthage, Illinois) promised the Republican businessmen of the Hamilton Club that if Chicagoans did not pass the charter, they could expect no essential or desirable laws from the legislature in their lifetime, while House Speaker Edward Shurtleff (Republican from Marengo) declared that a vote against the charter would prove the city incapable of governing itself and threatened to call a constitutional convention to restrict permanently Chicago's legislative representation. Prohibition forces further threatened that if the charter lost Senator Berry would run as Republican-Prohibitionist candidate for Governor and they predicted he would win.⁵⁵

That many charter supporters accepted this reasoning instead of standing up to the legislature further incited the Societies. In discussing the charter's political features before the City Club Morton Hull, a Republican state representative, told the audience that Chicago could receive a new charter only by abject compromise. In this instance compromise had meant the local-option bill; if this charter failed any future charter legislation could only be gained by paying a higher price, most likely permanent restriction. James Kittleman likewise declared himself ready to let the legislature (of which he was a member) dictate

⁵⁵Ibid., August 1 and August 8, 1907.

terms to Chicago. He dismissed all protests against that body's handling of the direct primary and ward districting provisions and warned that the city would never again have the opportunity to secure so much home rule from the legislature.⁵⁶

The Societies accused the downstate legislators and Chicago charter advocates of conspiring to force an undesirable charter upon the city and ultimately prohibition; the legislators, said the Societies, were "the newest threat to the local community which the charter supporters have thrown up."⁵⁷ The Staats-Zeitung pointed out to its readers that Senator Berry had both sponsored the new local-option bill and had tried to bury the liquor regulation bills in committee and thereby stifle any open discussion on them. The United Societies could not help but be suspicious about Berry's motives in supporting the charter. Moreover the ethnic groups found the now-or-never argument totally unacceptable, especially since they believed they had more home rule protection against prohibition under the Cities and Villages Act. For the United Societies this reform movement had become a choice between ratifying a charter with objectionable features and trusting the goodwill of the General Assembly and the willingness of Chicago's representatives to fight for the interests of the majority of their constituents, or reject this charter and pursue more complete local self-government. The ethnic organization easily committed itself to the latter course; the charter contained too many distasteful provisions and seemingly guaranteed Sun-

⁵⁶City Club, Bulletin 15 (June 27, 1907), p. 165-67 and 173.

⁵⁷Staats-Zeitung, August 10, 1907.

day closings and would conceivably give the temperance forces the weapon they needed to bring about prohibition.

IV

In the final weeks before the scheduled referendum each side stepped up its efforts to publicize its campaign and attract new supporters. Despite the backing of the three major newspapers, the Republican party, civic organizations, and prominent citizens the pro-charter drive was faltering and suffering defections. George Cole, a former convention delegate and founder of the Municipal Voters League, decided he could not accept the altered charter and declared his willingness to wait instead "for a constitutional convention that will give every municipality in the state thorough home rule and leave to the legislature merely the enactment of general legislation for all the state."⁵⁸ When the Real Estate News predicted that property owners of all types could not be counted on to vote yes because they were so disgruntled over the impending tax increases, the charter forces experienced another shock. They had expected the official organs of the real estate community to be enthusiastic backers of the charter; while the paper did not outright reject the charter it did conclude sympathetically that "the owner of real estate cannot be blamed for looking upon the inevitable growth of his tax bills as conclusive reason for voting against..."⁵⁹ A further blow came when the commissioners of the South Park Board, which would disband

⁵⁸ American, August 17, 1907. While this paper was partisan in its anti-charter coverage, there is no reason to suspect they made this up; in fact Cole was still advocating this approach a year later. Record-Herald, September 4, 1908.

⁵⁹ Real Estate News, August, 1907.

with consolidation, urged their constituents to vote against the charter.⁶⁰

A frustrated Mayor Busse, now an ardent backer of the charter, lashed out at the United Societies denouncing the organization as a tool of the brewers. He threatened to invoke the state law and close all saloons on Sunday if the charter was defeated.⁶¹ This, in turn, outraged the leaders of the Societies who emphatically denied any collusion with brewing interests.⁶² Nicholas Michels, secretary of the organization's anti-charter campaign, accused Busse of personally insulting the group's 100,000 members, who were "opposed to the charter on principle." Michels predicted that rather than intimidating ethnic voters Busse's threats would strengthen their determination to vote down the charter.⁶³

While the pro-charter campaign was faltering their opposing numbers were growing. The various opposition groups organized rallies and speeches to keep both their membership and the rest of the city informed about their cause up to the day of the referendum. The Independence League and the Democrats concentrated on attracting support on the ward level while the CFL and United Societies worked through their natural constituencies, although the Societies did send members of its anti-charter committee to attend and sometimes address rallies organized by other groups. The CFL continued to work hard against the charter by

⁶⁰ American, August 27, 1907.

⁶¹ Record-Herald, September 6, 1907.

⁶² Two members of the executive committee did own small breweries.

⁶³ Staats-Zeitung, September 7 and September 8, 1907.

disseminating information through its member locals.

The Societies conducted an all-out assault on the charter in the two weeks before the referendum. The executive committee barraged its membership with messages reminding them that it was important to remain united to "show that it was they who were responsible for the charter's defeat."⁶⁴ They also worked hard to recruit new support among ethnic societies. After listening to Nicholas Michels exhort them to stand united with others in the ethnic community on this issue the Chicago Turngemeinde adopted a resolution labeling the charter the "offspring of selfish politics, ruthless capitalism, narrow-minded bigotry, and loathsome hypocrisy." Its official publication, Die Harmonie, urged the membership to reject the charter because its gravest defect was its failure to grant the democratic right to self-government. Representatives from eighty affiliated societies of the Deutsch-Amerikanischen Nationalbundes (most of whom did not belong to the Societies) likewise adopted a negative stand against a charter they labeled a "shameful proposal which rural legislators and a few selfish local politicians might thrust upon the Citizens."⁶⁵

Because the Societies was strongest among the city's Germans and Bohemians it made a special effort to reach more personally other ethnic groups. On Saturday September 7 it sponsored a gathering for ethnic families at Riverview Amusement Park, and the next day distributed literature outside churches after services. Several aldermen sympathetic to the Societies campaign were also working to secure the ethnic vote in

⁶⁴Ibid., September 1, 1907.

⁶⁵Ibid., August 25, August 27, and September 5, 1907.

their wards and kept the Societies apprised of their progress. For example, Alderman Bowler (D-19th) reported that he had instructed the Germans and Bohemians of his ward about the dangers of the charter, and that although Yom Kippur began on the evening of voting day, the Jews of the ward strongly opposed the charter and he would work hard to see that they got to the polls.⁶⁶

The final campaign activities of both sides contrasted in style. The pro-charter forces were less visible to the rest of the city as they maneuvered among themselves collecting last minute endorsements. They were worried about Governor Deneen's lack of vocal support for the charter; he was apparently being cautious because people from his southside home area were unhappy about the park consolidation. Supporters breathed a sigh of relief when Deneen finally endorsed the charter for its home rule features, placating his constituents with assurances that any defects in the charter could be corrected later.⁶⁷ The Hyde Park Protective Association and several Protestant pastors around the city reaffirmed their support for the charter because it would better regulate liquor consumption in the city.

Not all of the supporters' activities were circumspect however. The Republican party controlled several important municipal offices and the opposition forces charged that last minute anti-charter rallies were being raided by the police and that the post office was failing to deliver their literature.⁶⁸ (Mayor Busse was formerly the postmaster of

⁶⁶ Ibid., September 7, 1907.

⁶⁷ Inter-Ocean, September 11, 1906; Tribune, September 16, 1907.

⁶⁸ Inter-Ocean, September 14, 1907.

the city and presumably not without lingering influence over in the post office.) These charges remained unsubstantiated but three days before the referendum the charter supporters did petition the election board (composed chiefly of Republicans) to reverse its earlier ruling and designate the referendum a special and not a general election. This was extremely important because in a special election workers were not entitled to two hours off work for voting. Despite the protests of the United Societies, the CFL, and others that this was a blatant attempt to hinder working-class voters and thereby diminish turnout among those most likely to be voting no, the election board made the change.⁶⁹

The three newspapers supporting the charter ran last minute editorials and endorsements, all of which appeared to confirm the opponents' suspicions that this was an elitest charter. Mayor Busse, for instance, was quoted as saying "the best thought of the best citizenship in this community approves the Charter. It is demanded by the press, the pulpit, the commercial and industrial interests."⁷⁰ The editorials were in the same vein, stressing the progressive nature of the charter and those favoring it, and dismissing again the validity of all protests about the legislature's changes. The Daily News characterized opponents as part of the world-wide movement against progress which was being stirred up by interests who operated best under weak, disorderly, and confused government.⁷¹ The Tribune printed a cartoon with a hand labeled "Progressive Citizen" casting an affirmative vote and bearing the caption "Tonight the

⁶⁹Staats-Zeitung, September 14, 1907; Examiner, September 15, 1907.

⁷⁰Record-Herald, September 14, 1907.

⁷¹Daily News, September 16, 1907.

city will know whether it is under the control of progressives or reactionaries." Finally, Alexander Revell, in a series of Tribune articles, specifically discounted the loss of the direct primary using reasoning which contradicted his eloquent defense during the convention of popular democracy and the competence of the people to govern themselves. The direct primary, remarked Revell, could only work when the people acquired "a sufficient knowledge of public affairs and sufficient independence to act for themselves independent of the leadership of the bosses." Since such conditions did not prevail, it was "useless to legislate too far in advance of popular conditions."⁷²

The Independence League and United Societies concentrated their final energies on holding large public rallies on the weekend before the referendum. For a week preceding its rally the Societies and the two major German language dailies increased their coverage of the anti-charter campaign. The newspapers repeatedly exhorted Germans, as the important leaders of the United Societies, to turn out at the rally in great numbers, and also printed every day the Societies' announcement of the demonstration and the notices of individual German societies urging their members to attend the rally. In its announcement the Societies proclaimed that the time had come for Chicago citizens to vote on whether they will "preserve their hard-earned progress on the difficult questions of personal liberty" or whether they will subjugate themselves to the dictates of rural fanatics and hypocritical lawmakers."⁷³

⁷²Tribune, September 16 and September 17, 1907.

⁷³Staats-Zeitung, September 11 thru September 17, 1907.

The Societies then climaxed its campaign at a rally in Grant Park, just east of the city's downtown area, attended by more than 35,000 people.⁷⁴ Half of the participants assembled at various points near downtown and paraded through the streets with banners, flags, and bands. Ten thousand Germans, Swiss, and Luxemburgers, marching with eight bands and six drum and bugle corps converged on Grant Park from the near north side, while 5000 Bohemians, 5000 Croations, and members of Danish, Polish, Belgian, and Italian societies, all with marching bands, came from the southwest and other areas of the city. Speakers addressing the crowd in several languages urged their listeners to vote in spite of the hardship it might entail because the proposed charter threatened them personally and working people in general. They charged that the taxation scheme of the charter "deprived the masses for the benefit of the few because what really was needed was a scheme to compel all to pay their fair share and not a higher tax rate"; that Sunday closings were a real threat if the charter was ratified; and that redistricting "deprived the working man of his vote."⁷⁵ Nothing new was said at this rally but its size and enthusiasm should have told charter supporters quite clearly that they faced a tough fight at the polls.

Two days later the voters soundly defeated the charter 121,935 to 59,786; only four of the city's thirty-five wards ratified the charter and two of these wards contained a high number of Republican middle and upper-class voters. The Democratic wards voted heavily against the

⁷⁴Abendpost and Staats-Zeitung, September 16, 1907. The 35,000 participants were almost exclusively male and hence potential voters.

⁷⁵Staats-Zeitung, September 16, 1907.

charter and the ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth wards where the United Societies was very strong defeated the charter by a margin of almost four to one.⁷⁶

The losers responded with a mixture of bitterness and resignation, but with little understanding or feeling for the concerns which had been expressed by their opponents and had led to the charter's defeat. A keely disappointed Walter Fisher charged that the charter had been beaten by a "combination of selfishness and stupidity with which every constructive movement has to contend..."; this was the same man who four days earlier had expressed supreme confidence in the people's integrity to always reject political bosses.⁷⁷ The Tribune declared that the city had proved "it does not want home rule...that it does want a patchwork of taxing bodies...that it does not want uniformity, efficiency, and sanity in government."⁷⁸ Only the Record-Herald attempted a more even-handed assessment, attributing the loss to the citizens' fear of increased taxation and Sunday closings.⁷⁹ Charles Merriam, a month later, suggested that while these fears may have been real, they were unwarranted and irrational and that "political juggling" had organized and played upon these fears. (Precisely what "political juggling" meant, he did not explain.) He could not understand why men such as Post and Robbins had opposed the charter, and he was saddened by the

⁷⁶Daily News, Almanac (1908), p. 495. Referenda conducted at special elections tended to produce a lower voter turnout than those held at regular elections. See Ibid., 1900-1908.

⁷⁷Record-Herald, September 18, 1907; Walter L. Fisher to M.H. Lebensohn, September 14, 1907, Walter L. Fisher Papers.

⁷⁸Tribune, September 18, 1907.

⁷⁹Record-Herald, September 18, 1907.

charter's defeat.⁸⁰ Finally one anonymous loser suggested that the "uplifters" such as Fisher and Milton Foreman would have to be shaken off before Chicago could compromise on charter reform.⁸¹

On the other side the anti-charter forces were elated by their success. The Broad-Ax called it a "Giant Victory for the common people." William O'Connell declared it a sign that "the men of Chicago will not accept a charter prepared for them by a convention of special interests and given its finishing touches in a legislature dominated by party politics." The American proclaimed victory for the Independence League, United Societies, Democratic party, CFL and other labor groups over the wealth of the corporations and the Republican organization.⁸² But no group was happier than the United Societies. The organization assumed credit for engineering the charter's defeat proclaiming that the people of Chicago realized the threat to personal liberty and the other dangerous provisions "thanks to the work of the charter opponents, especially the United Societies."⁸³

Over the next few months both sides began planning their next steps in trying to bring political reform to Chicago, for no one was content to allow prevailing conditions to continue. The day after the referendum the United Societies warned the city that the charter's

⁸⁰ Charles Merriam to H.B. Chamberlain, October 11, 1907; Charles Merriam to G.A. Cuthbertson, October 17, 1907, Charles Merriam Papers. The charges of political juggling were echoed by Milton Foreman in "Chicago New Charter Movement--Its Relation to Municipal Ownership," The Annals 31 (May 1908), p. 1-2.

⁸¹ Inter-Ocean, September 18, 1907.

⁸² Broad-Ax, September 21, 1907; Record-Herald, September 18, 1907; American, September 18, 1907.

⁸³ Staats-Zeitung, September 18, 1907.

defeat had only been the first round. "We have not only won," said Nicholas Michels, "we are preparing for a second fight...We will not rest until our citizens have secured personal liberty forever."⁸⁴

⁸⁴Ibid.

CHAPTER VII

CHICAGO REMAINS "UNREFORMED"

Efforts to reform the municipal government did not cease immediately, but a new charter was never again presented to Chicago voters. Disregarding all evidence to the contrary the reformers hoped that the disagreements of the previous year could be overcome if they tried again. But the group alignments which had developed in 1907 as well as the positions these groups had assumed remained firm and hampered compromise. Also, the antagonism between the city and state seemed worsened after the city rejected the legislature's amended charter, as important members of the legislature had promised during the campaign. Equally important for the fate of subsequent reform efforts, and the city's future political development in general, the United Societies had emerged from the 1907 campaign as a political force which could not be ignored. And the Societies was resolutely determined to promote and protect ethnic interests in all municipal affairs.

I

The warning signs that these conflicting ideas could not be overcome easily were evident soon after the referendum. The CFL continued to call for municipal reform based on the extension of popular democracy. Encouraged by the charter's defeat the labor organization again demanded a new state constitution rather than a municipal charter. The primary

issue of reform, argued the CFL, was who controlled government, the people or "PIRATICAL wealth." Since the old constitution gave control to the wealthy and the corporations—the same groups the CFL believed to be the most avid supporters of a new charter—such a new charter was simply an amendment which transferred some power to the municipality but kept control of the government in the hands of the privileged few. Only a new constitution, drafted by a popularly elected convention, would give the citizens a real voice in enacting both state and local reforms. The CFL once more urged its membership to oppose any measures which would not satisfy the goal of popular democracy.¹

Other groups were less adamant about the idea of a new charter, but they too stressed that such a reform would never be accepted if it ignored the wishes of the majority. In a speech before the City Club in late October Raymond Robins admonished the reformers for underestimating the independence and intelligence of the citizens. The people rejected the charter, Robins said, because they "intend to govern Chicago. They intend to make Chicago what they want it to be, and if they don't want it to be what you want it to be your wise policy will be directed toward changing their desires." They would not accept reforms generated by a body which neither represented nor was directly responsible to them, warned Robins, nor would they accept the "dishonest and corrupt" work of the legislature on the basis that it was the best that could be gotten.²

¹CFL, Minutes, October 6, 197.

²City Club, Bulletin 19 (October 23, 1907), p. 219-18.

No group was more encouraged by the charter's defeat or more determined to influence any future reform attempts than the United Societies. The charter campaign, Nicholas Michels told the same gathering of the City Club, was a "great lesson for those who thought they could control the city and the votes of the ethnic groups."³ It had also been a great experience for the ethnic groups themselves; they had learned how to organize, strengthen their ranks, and to publicize and fight for their interests. From now on Chicagoans could expect to hear from the Societies on every issue of importance to its members. Any future charter, according to Michels, had to provide for free and equal elections, a uniform and equitable system of taxation, and most importantly home rule on all questions "dear to the majority of our people."⁴

In the succeeding months the United Societies sought to capitalize on its success. First it consolidated its position as the voice of the city's non-Irish ethnic community. By May of 1908 the organization claimed that eighty-eight societies with over 23,000 members had joined since the charter campaign for a total of 628 member societies—315 German, 173 Bohemian, eighty Polish, thirty-three Italian, and twenty-seven Danish, Belgian, and other ethnic societies.⁵ Secondly the Societies outlined a political program it would follow in the future. An important component of this program was a decision to enter directly the political arena, either by running their own candidates or actively sup-

³Ibid., p. 216.

⁴Ibid., p. 217.

⁵Staats-Zeitung, May 24, 1908.

porting and opposing others. As its first step in this direction the political action committee requested all candidates in the April 1908 aldermanic contest to support the Societies' stand against Sunday closings, high saloon licenses, and all temperance measures in general; it then urged ethnic voters to defeat all those who refused to give such a pledge. The election results cheered the Societies which claimed that twenty-two of the thirty-five aldermen elected had supported the group's position.⁶

The decision to support candidates had not been made without resistance, however, and at the third annual convention several delegates attempted to temper this policy by proposing that no officer of the organization be allowed to hold public office. The delegates making the proposal were primarily German and among the original founders of the Societies. While they had genuine doubts about the wisdom of this new political course their proposal was also a thinly veiled attempt to limit the influence of Anton Cermak, the Bohemian state legislator who had become the organization's Secretary. The opponents of the proposal countered by arguing that electing members of political office would facilitate the Societies' goals and the proposal lost decisively with many Germans joining the almost solid opposition of the Bohemians, Poles, and other ethnic groups.⁷ The German influence in the Societies was diminished somewhat after this incident, although by no means eliminated as Germans continued to occupy many important offices in the following years. After this convention the Societies experienced little opposition

⁶Record-Herald, February 27 and April 8, 1908.

⁷Staats-Zeitung, May 25, 1908.

from within its ranks over the new political activities.

The Societies' political program was aimed at promoting cultural and political democracy in Chicago by instituting municipal self-government and popular decision-making. It was rooted in a profound distrust of the rural state legislature which time after time had attempted to impose unpopular restrictions upon the city; a resolve to fight prohibition and any other attacks on their way of life; and a refusal to rely on any other group, including political bosses, to protect ethnic interests.⁸ The Societies was determined to fight any future reform proposals which violated any of these tenets.

Despite these signs of strong and possibly irreconcilable desires among the various groups in the community several of the more ardent supporters of the old charter renewed the campaign in the fall of 1908. They knew that as long as the 1904 enabling amendment was in effect the city could continue to prepare a new charter and they decided to reconvene the old convention and try again. Forty-four members of the old convention thus met in September to consider the best way to go about writing another charter. They appointed a committee of sixteen to redraft a charter by comparing the original as written by the convention with the legislature's version and arrive at "just compromises" on the disputed provisions.⁹ The committee was then to bring their proposals to the full convention.

Some spirit of compromise did exist for awhile among the members of the reconvened body. They agreed, for instance, that the provisions

⁸For examples see Ibid., January 20, February 10, and May 25, 1908.

⁹Record-Herald, September 4 and October 13, 1908.

in the old charter which had raised the most objections--e.g. revenue, Sunday closings, ward redistricting--needed to be redrawn to satisfy more of the citizens. Further, in response to a request from Catherine McCullough of the Illinois Equal Suffrage Association, the convention decided to allow non-members an opportunity to appear before the convention, thereby reversing one of the hotly disputed policies of the earlier assembly.¹⁰

Women immediately availed themselves of this opportunity and representatives of professional, club, and working women's groups once again appealed to the men to give women an official voice in municipal affairs. The majority of the convention still balked at including woman suffrage in the charter however and instead they agreed to submit a separate bill on suffrage to the legislature hoping to appease women enough to keep them from opposing the charter. This maneuver disheartened women who suspected, as Charles Merriam told the convention, that suffrage needed to be incorporated into the charter because the legislature would surely defeat any separate measure.¹¹

The United Societies, on the other hand, was not disappointed. Vowing that it would not countenance another separate bill on liquor regulation, the United Societies sent representatives to speak before the convention on this matter, and to counteract the demands of the Law and Order League's spokesman that the matter be left entirely to the state legislature. The Societies asked that the charter give the City

¹⁰ Charles Merriam to Catherine W. McCullough, November 4, 1908, Charles Merriam Papers.

¹¹ Record-Herald, November 17, 1908.

Council sole power to control and regulate the sale of liquor along with providing that any ordinances changing the charter provisions on this matter were to be submitted to popular referendum.¹² Arthur Farwell of the Law and Order League asked that the convention turn down the Societies' request because "the farmers of the state are stronger on moral questions than is the council."¹³ Most members of the convention acknowledged the role this issue and the Societies had played in the earlier defeat and they were inclined to dismiss Farwell's request and accept the proposal of the United Societies. Walter Fisher had in fact reversed his previous stance and urged his colleagues to give the city broad home rule powers on this and other issues.¹⁴ The convention therefore agreed to include the Societies' proposal in the charter.

The convention made other substantive changes to the original charter which it hoped removed the major objections enough to convince the voters to adopt it in its new form.¹⁵ To lessen fears of higher taxes they reduced the limit of allowable bonded indebtedness from five percent to four percent of full property valuation and replaced a vaguely worded section with one that specified that for general tax purposes assessed valuation would be one percent of the full value. The new charter reinstated the old ward system of thirty-five wards with

¹²Ibid., December 1, 1908.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid., October 28, 1908.

¹⁵Chicago Charter Convention, An Act to Provide a Charter for the City of Chicago (1909), unpublished, Chicago Historical Society.

two aldermen each and mandated that any ordinances changing this system could be submitted to a referendum by petition of fifteen percent of the voters. The convention also heeded requests to place the security and health of the people ahead of private property rights and gave the City Council power to force owners to make necessary improvements in their property. In a final gesture to the United Societies, the convention agreed to include a provision that specifically exempted Chicago from any future state laws on liquor regulation.¹⁶ Several sections of the original charter including the all-important consolidation bill remained unchanged in this new version.

Just when it appeared that the convention had agreed on a municipal charter which not only reflected the wishes of the majority--there was still hope that the CFL would find enough popular democracy in the new charter to support it--but also promised to give Chicago a solidly reformed and progressive government, several of the more conservative convention members intervened. Led by B.F. Sunny, these men proposed a further compromise: instead of submitting the complete charter to the legislature it should be broken down and presented as separate bills.¹⁷ The legislature would then be free to reject any provisions to which it objected without Chicago once again being deprived of all the benefits of reform. In despair over this new development, Walter Fisher pleaded that the new charter "is a compromise. Every provision is a compromise," and he asked the convention to reject Sunny's proposal because it was

¹⁶Chicago Charter Convention, "Resolutions and Communications Received at the Meeting Held January 29, 1909," unpublished, Chicago Historical Society.

¹⁷Record-Herald, February 8, 1909.

time for the city to demand exactly what it wanted from the legislature.¹⁸ Fisher believed that this new proposal, if accepted, would undo all the careful compromises which had been worked out. Fisher was right. The convention voted by a margin of nineteen to seventeen to submit eleven separate bills¹⁹ and this decision combined with legislative maneuverings combined to doom charter reform altogether.

The United Societies was outraged; it had already warned the convention that it would not accept a separate liquor bill because the legislature was certain to defeat it as it had done in 1907. Feeling betrayed the Societies announced it would not support the separate bills. "We are not going to vote for a lot of measures for these so-called reformers," proclaimed Anton Cermak, "and then get stuck ourselves."²⁰ The Societies feared that some Chicago legislators who had no strong feelings on the liquor question could be persuaded by prohibition legislators to vote against the liquor bill by promises of support for other measures which were more important to them. Furthermore, before the liquor bill was sent to Springfield its article on general state laws was amended. Rather than stating outright that any new state laws on liquor would not apply in Chicago, the amended version said such laws would not be presumed to cover the city if they conflicted with the liquor bill unless the legislature expressly declared that the law would cover the entire state.²¹ The conservatives were able to change this

¹⁸Ibid., February 23, 1909.

¹⁹The most important of these were consolidation, home rule, Sunday closings, woman suffrage, education, referendum, and public utilities.

²⁰Record-Herald, March 16, 1909.

²¹Ibid., March 24, 1909.

section as well as win on the question of separate bills largely because attendance was quite erratic and what measures passed at any one meeting depended on which members were present.

It did not take long for the charter package to unravel completely. When the bill to consolidate the city, parks, and board of education was introduced several legislators once again introduced yet another bill to limit permanently Chicago's representation and announced a trade-off: consolidation for restriction.²² Then other Republican legislators attempted to amend the bill to give the Governor power to appoint the park board members rather than the Mayor—a blatant partisan move based on the presumption that the Governor was more often a Republican and the Mayor a Democrat—and Representative Cermak vowed to vote against the consolidation bill, and all hope for charter reform vanished.²³ The consolidation bill failed by one vote in its first Senate vote with all but one of the downstaters voting against it as well as United Societies member Cyril Jandus. The final defeat in the legislature was decisive: the bill lost in the Senate twenty-one to twenty-six, and thirty-four to ninety-eight in the House where Cermak and twenty-three Cook County Democrats either voted no or did not vote. Their votes could not have passed the consolidation bill but they gave downstaters an excuse to reject this and other charter bills on the grounds that they could hardly be expected to know what Chicago wanted when the city itself did not seem to know.²⁴

²²Philip, p. 66-72. The restriction bill failed by a vote of thirty-one to nineteen in the Senate, all negative votes cast by Chicago Senators.

²³Record-Herald, May 6 and May 12, 1909.

²⁴Philip, p. 178.

Consolidation had been the heart of the charter reformers' program for without it they could not change the revenue system and when it was defeated this second time they were too disheartened to begin again. But the municipal problems persisted and the heavy hand of the state legislature continued to be felt in municipal affairs. In 1913, for instance, it placed all public utilities under the jurisdiction of a state commission, a move that completely severed the city's control of the utilities. While other states had also created such regulatory commissions and there were applauded by some reformers who believed they would greatly enhance efficiency, to many in Chicago this was yet another example of the state usurping legitimate municipal powers.

Since the defeat of the 1909 charter the City Council had been considering the question of charter reform but had taken little action. Then in early 1914 it created a thirty-member commission--fifteen aldermen, four state representatives, and eleven private citizens--to draft a charter which would consolidate the taxing bodies and give Chicago the home rule powers to control public utilities and completely overhaul the revenue system.²⁵ This effort was as ineffectual as the previous two; the state legislature passed only the bill to consolidate the parks with the city and refused to pass any others. The minor consolidation bill was subsequently defeated in a referendum vote and the issue of charter reform faded from public view.

²⁵Chicago, Journal of the City Council, July 22, 1912, p. 1644; January 20, 1913, p. 3353; February 14, 1913, p. 3730; March 9, 1914, p. 4362-63. For details of this Commission's work see Proceedings of the Permanent Charter Commission (1914-1915), Municipal Reference Library, Chicago, Illinois.

II

The quest for home rule powers that nearly everyone professed to favor was in reality, as those who study the Progressive Era realize, a struggle over who was going to rule at home. The good government forces wanted to revise the revenue and governing structures for greater efficiency, to increase potential tax monies, and to centralize the decision-making powers of the municipal government. The CFL and the United Societies wanted to make that government more directly responsible to the voters through extensive local self-government, initiative and referendum powers, and direct elections of more governing officials, while women wanted an official voice in municipal affairs. Charter reform failed in Chicago, in the final analysis, because the citizens could not agree on the purposes and objectives of such reforms.

Cities throughout the country faced similar problems and yet enacted reform charters during the Progressive Era; why were these problems insurmountable in Chicago? First of all, any charter legislation for the city had to be submitted to popular referendum, a technical problem which other cities did not face. For example, in Pittsburgh (1911), Galveston (1901), and Houston (1904) influential businessmen wrote new charter bills which were then passed by their state legislatures and automatically enacted because there was no requirement that they be put before the voters. Half of Boston's charter of 1909 was simply enacted by the legislature while the rest went to popular referendum. In Chicago on the other hand the charter convention of 1902 had specifically written a clause in the enabling amendment which stipulated that any charter legislation for the city had to be ratified by the voters. This clause meant that the disagreements among Chicagoans on their aspirations for

the city could become an insurmountable obstacle to the enactment of a new charter.

The referendum gave Chicagoans the opportunity to reject a charter they disliked; the substantive reasons for its defeat lay in the strength of the feelings that divided them. Class issues, for example, were extremely important in Chicago politics. Class antagonisms here went back, as shown earlier, to the 1880s. Haymarket, Pullman, and other instances of industrial strife had provided, labor believed, ample evidence that business intended to use government to further its own interests--particularly to keep the working people powerless and oppressed. Although the Socialists and the more moderate elements of the labor movement remained divided on policies, tactics, and ultimate goals, all agreed by the early twentieth century that every municipal issue was potentially a class issue. These fears were clearly manifested throughout the charter campaign as the CFL proffered for one issue after another, solutions which differed dramatically from those favored by leading business and professional groups. In the end the CFL would denounce the proposed charter as an "insidious attempt to dress Chicago in a corporate strait jacket and to bind labor to the chariot wheel of a power mad plutocracy."²⁶

A similar story can be told of conflicts between prohibition and ethnic forces, which were also common throughout the United States. In this case the intensity of the struggle was heightened by the unrelenting antagonism between Chicago and the rest of the state. Ethnic groups firmly believed that the majority of Chicagoans were against prohibition and that this sentiment should determine all temperance decisions

²⁶CFL, Minutes, July 21, 1907.

within the city. Once the proposed charter threatened to place the city back under general state laws and the legislature forced passage of a new local-option act in return for the charter, the United Societies was convinced that being in the majority in the city meant nothing. The ethnic community envisioned being overrun by the rural Protestant temperance forces in the rest of the state and could not accept any charter which increased this possibility. For its part the state tied its effort to impose its will on Chicago to the charter--and this quite probably meant stricter temperance laws--and in 1907 the United Societies had the power to thwart this.

The eagerness of the legislature to impose prohibition on Chicago was typical of relations between the city and state. Chicago was a huge, growing industrial and immigrant city in the early twentieth century. No other urban area in Illinois could begin to compare with it and the rural and small-town elements of the rest of the state were terrified of being dominated by the city. The state legislature thus tried to use the charter movement to control the city by making it clear it would grant only limited home rule, by attempting once again to trade passage of the charter for permanent restriction of Chicago's representation in Springfield, and by rejecting the separate bills on liquor regulation and forcing Chicago's representatives to accept the local option-bill in return for the charter. Indeed most of the men who wrote the 1907 charter acknowledged that certain provisions could not be put into the charter even though highly desired by the majority of the city because the state legislature would not accept them. The people of Chicago resented the legislature's attempt to interfere in municipal affairs as they had re-

sented all earlier incidents, and groups such as the United Societies and the CFL were prepared to fight for extensive home rule as the only way to insure their municipal objectives. Whatever chance there may have been for Chicagoans to compromise among themselves on the charter was virtually destroyed by the enmity between the city and the rest of the state.

The charter reform movement played an important role in Chicago's history. First, because the charter failed, Chicago, unlike other large cities in the Progressive Era never experienced the structural reforms which consolidated overlapping and wasteful governing bodies, encouraged government by experts, and diminished the influence of party politics in municipal government. The ward-based decentralized structure persisted and municipal government remained the preserve of party politicians who garnered personal and party loyalty in return for personalized government. Furthermore, without charter reform the city had to wait until the new constitution of 1970 to secure any measure of home rule. Without home rule Chicago, in the twentieth century, has continued to have certain municipal affairs directed by the General Assembly and because the antagonism between city and state has also continued, this situation has often worked against the city.

Another important consequence of the charter movement was that it politicized the city's ethnic groups and organized workers--the people who would form the backbone of the political machine. The CFL had already been moving toward increased political participation and the tenor of the charter reform movement further convinced organized labor of the absolute necessity of continuing in this direction if they were to avoid

being crushed by the city's powerful business interests. In the United Societies ethnic groups had learned the value of organization and political activism for getting what they wanted. Under the leadership of Anton Cermak the United Societies, in the ensuing years, worked to elect men sympathetic to its causes and to thwart all attempts to impose prohibition measures on Chicago. By 1931 when Cermak was elected the first non-Irish ethnic mayor, ethnic groups had come to know and understand the necessity of standing up for themselves.

Finally Chicago's charter reform movement is important because it reveals what the various groups which comprised the city wanted from their municipal government. Charter reform was not the concern of any single social, economic, or political group nor were those groups who ultimately opposed the charter simply playing negative roles. The various groups clearly understood their interests and realized that the provisions of a new charter would in fact determine the distribution of political power within the city. In the charter movement women, ethnic groups, and organized labor declared themselves legitimate members of their community entitled to help write the laws and shape the municipal government under which they would live and work. In the process the United Societies and the CFL led their constituencies in formulating a vision of political and cultural democracy based on municipal self-government and popular decision-making which was incompatible with the goal of a government run with business-like efficiency and expertise desired by many reformers and businessmen. The charter failed because a majority of Chicagoans did not like the municipal government which it would have established and these people had the power and the incentive to reject this charter.

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Appendix I

UNION LOCALS AFFILIATED WITH
CHICAGO FEDERATION OF LABOR-1907

Amalgamated Association of Street Railway Employees - 4 locals
Amalgamated Street Railway Employees - 2 locals
Amalgamated Street Car Men - 1 local
Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel, and Tin Workers - 1 local
Associated Vaudeville Artists - 1 local
Asphalt Pavers and Helpers - 1 local
Bakers Union - 1 local
Bakery and Confectioners - 2 locals
Barbers - 1 local
Bartenders - 1 local
Beer Bottlers - 1 local
Bill Posters and Billers - 1 local
Bookbinders - 1 local
Bookkeepers Association - 1 local
Boot and Shoe Workers - 5 locals
Bottlers Protective Union - 1 local
Blacksmiths and Helpers - 3 locals
Brewers and Malsters - 2 locals
Brewers Laborers - 1 local
Brickmakers - 7 locals
Brush Makers - 1 local
Car Workers - 2 locals
Carpenters and Joiners - 23 locals
Caulkers - 1 local
Chicago Trades Union Label League
Cement Finishers - 1 local
Cement and Construction - 1 local
Cement Workers - 2 locals
Cigar Makers - 1 local
Cigar Packers - 1 local
City Firemen's Association - 1 local
Clerks (Retail) - 2 locals
Cloth, Hat and Cap Makers - 1 local
Conduit Trench Laborers - 1 local
Coopers - 4 locals
Drain Layers and Helpers - 1 local
Egg Inspectors - 1 local
Electrical Workers - 5 locals
Elevator Conductors and Starters - 1 local
Firemen, Stationary - 1 local
Flat Janitors - 2 locals
Freight Handlers - 4 locals
Gardeners and Florists - 1 local
Garment Workers - 7 locals
Gas and Electric Fixture Hangers - 1 local
Gas Fitters - 1 local
Glove Workers - 2 locals

Grocery Employees - 1 local
 Hod Carriers - 1 local
 Horse Shoers - 1 local
 Horse Nail Makers - 1 local
 Hair Spinners - 1 local
 Hat Finishers Association - 1 local
 Hoisting Portable Engineers - 1 local
 Iron Moulders - 1 local
 Iron Workers - 1 local
 Jewelry Makers and Workers - 2 locals
 Laundry Workers - 1 local
 Lithographers - 2 locals
 Machinists - 7 locals
 Mailers Union - 1 local
 Marble Workers - 1 local
 Marine Cooks - 1 local
 Marine Firemen, Oilers and Watertenders - 1 local
 Metal Polishers - 1 local
 Musicians - 1 local
 Municipal Water Pipe Layers - 1 local
 Piano Workers - 1 local
 Painters and Decorators - 1 local
 Paper Hangers - 1 local
 Pattern Makers - 1 local
 Photo Engravers - 1 local
 Photographic Employees - 1 local
 Plumbers - 1 local
 Postoffice Clerks - 1 local
 Pressmen - 1 local
 Printers' Roller Makers - 1 local
 Seaman's Union - 1 local
 Sheet Metal Workers - 4 locals
 Shipwrights - 1 local
 Sprinkler Fitters - 1 local
 South Chicago Trades and Labor Assembly
 Spring Workers - 1 local
 Sewer Cleaners - 1 local
 Steam Engineers - 3 locals
 Steam Fitters - 1 local
 Steam Pipe and Boiler Coverers - 1 local
 Stove Mounters - 1 local
 Stone Pavers - 1 local
 Suspender Workers - 1 local
 Stable Employees - 1 local
 Sub Paving Inspectors - 1 local
 Stereotypers - 1 local
 Switchmen - 2 locals
 Tailors - 1 local
 Chicago Federation of Teachers
 Teamsters - 13 locals

Telegraphers - 1 local
Theatrical Employees - 1 local
Tugmen - 2 locals
Typographical Workers - 3 locals
Tuckpointers - 1 local
Upholsterers - 2 locals
Watchmakers - 2 locals
Water Pipe Extension Laborers - 1 local
Waiters - 1 local
Waitresses - 1 local
Wallpaper, Machine Printers and Color Mixers - 1 local
Wax and Plaster Model Makers - 1 local
Webb Pressmen - 1 local
Well Drillers - 1 local
Women's Trade Union League
Women's Trade Union Labor League
Woodworkers - 5 locals
Wood, Wire and Metal - 1 local

APPENDIX II

MEMBER SOCIETIES OF THE UNITED
SOCIETIES FOR LOCAL SELF-
GOVERNMENT MAY 1906

Schwaben-verein von Chicago
Gesangverein harmonie
Concordia Männerchor
Junger Männerchor
Korner Loge, 64
Seneselder Liederkranz
Chicago Stamm No. 286
Freundschaft Loge No. 6
Verein der Braudenburger
North Chicago Männerchor
Arion Männerchor der Sudseite
Sozialer Turnverein
Liedertafel Eintracht
Teutonia Männerchor
Nordwestseite Turnerschaft
Alter Wirthsverein
Turnverein Eiche
Katholisches Kasino
Hessen-verein von Chicago
Schweizer Männerchor
North Chicago Wirthsverein
Hamburger Klub
Westseite Harmonie
Richard Wagner Männerchor
Deutscher Verein der Westseite
Gemischter Chor "Fritz Reuter"
Verein der Hannoveraner und
Brauschweiger
Deutsch-Amerikanischer Kranken-
Unterstützungs-Verein
Central-Turnverein
Gesangverein "Frohsinn"
Geneva Klub
Sud-Chicago Turnverein
LaSalle Turnverein
Grosspark Liederkranz
Nordwest Chicago Concertina Club
Kaiser-Friedrich Unterstützungsverein
Deutscher Klub von Chicago
Liedertafel Vorwärts
Prinzessin Heinrich Unterstützungs-
verein
Verein des Ost-und Westpreussen
Trierischer Unabh. Bruderbund
Olympai Männerchor

Schiller Männerchor
Lessing Loge
Nordseite Badtscher
Lincoln Loge No. 569
Trierischer Unterstützungsverein
Westseite Sanger kranz
Turnverein Einigkeit
Sudseite Liederkranz
Douglas Gegens. Unterstützungs.
Verein Saxonia
Gemischter Chor Unabh.
Chicago Loge No. 1
Deutsche Krieger-Kameradschaft
Deutscher Kriegerverein von Chicago
Sektion 14, Gegens. Unterstützungs.
Deutscher Freundschafts-Bund
Order Mutual Protection No. 47
Brighton Park Loge
Chicago Turngemeinde
Altdeutscher Unterstützungs.
Vorwärts Loge No. 137
Badischer Unterstützungsverein
der Sudseite
Hoffnung Loge
Deutscher Fleischer Unterstützungs.
Oesterreicher und Bayern-Verein
Gegenseitiger Unterstützungs
Verein "Bavaria"
Oesterreicher Verein "Stock im
Gisen"
Gegens. Unterstützungs.-Verein
von Chicago
Deutscher Kreigerversin Sud-Chicago
Chicago Fraternal League
Chicago Frosch Klub
Beckmann Loge No. 188
Union Männerchor
Schiller Liedertafel
Pfalzer Verein
Turnverein Vorwärts
Reuter Liedertafel
Sozialer Arbeiterverein der Sud-
westseite
Aurora Turnverein
Rheinischer Verein

Treue Bruderloge No. 325
 Grütst-Verein
 Lincoln Park Loge
 Kurhessischer Unterstützungs-
 Verein
 "Fidelia" Gemischter Chor
 Teutonia Männerchor
 Fritz Reuter Council
 Prinz Heinrich Unterstützungs-
 Progretz Loge
 Deutscher Verein Prinz Heinrich 1
 Garfield Unterstützungsverein
 Orvheus Männerchor
 Schleswig-holsteiner Verein
 Deutscher Kranken Unterstützungs-
 Schwabischer Sängerbund
 Klub Frohsinn
 Vorwärts Männerchor
 Kurhessischer Unterstützungs-
 Liedertafel Einigkeit
 Orden der Hermanns-Söhne
 Deutscher Landwehr Verein
 Verband der Veteranen der Deutschen
 Armee
 Schleswig-holsteiner Sängerbund
 Harugari Männerchor
 Bayrisch-Amerikanischer Verein von
 Chicago und 10 zweig vereine
 Deutscher Orden Harugari und unter-
 geordnete Logen
 Plattdeutsche Grotz-gilde und 45
 Gildern
 Teutonia Turnverein
 Wicker Park Männerchor
 Chicago Quartett Klub
 Euphonia Gesangverein
 Douglas Loge No. 177
 Typographia No. 9
 Vereinigte Schweizer Vereine
 West Chicago Wriths-Verein
 Columbus Männerchor
 Verein Deutscher Wassengenossen
 Erster Böhmischer Katholischer
 Unterstützungs., 16 Logen mit
 6000 Mitgliedern
 Nordfelles Supreme Loge
 Kroatian Liberty Society
 Kroatian Sloga Society

Brindisti di Montagno
 Singing Society "Zora"
 Lodge Jan Nerneck No. 181
 Polish Mechanics Society No. 8
 Hungarian Singing Society of Chicago
 Plzensky Sokol
 Bohemian Saloonkeepers Association
 Prytiti So. Kiri
 So. Vaclerva 65
 Rav Praka--cis--13
 Bohemian Foresters
 The Danish Veterans
 Turning Society Slvanska Lipa
 Firu Hungarian Social and Bene-
 volent Society
 Leif Erickson No. 9
 Montezuma Benevolent Association
 Sokol Chicago
 Lodge 24 Firi Podebradsky Bohemi-
 an Benevolent Association
 The Polish Turners No. 1
 St. Prowsims 1
 Svithiod Lodge No. 1
 47 Societies of the Polish National
 Alliance
 26 Lodges of the Bohemian Bene-
 volent Association
 Nera Fryge No. 1
 Norwegian Björgrein Singing Society
 Independent Order of Svithiod
 22 Lodges
 Singing Society Magnetio
 Grotz Society
 Italienische Gesellschaften

APPENDIX III

UNITED SOCIETIES FOR LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT
OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 1906

OFFICERS

Irish

Charles C. Gilbert - lawyer

German

Franz Amberg - liveryman

George Pfeiffer - occupation unknown

John P. Rickard - conductor

Felix Wysow - bookkeeper

Bohemian

John A. Cervenka - saloonkeeper

Croatian

Steve Popovich - saloonkeeper

Polish

S.W. Haremski - lawyer

Hungarian

Berthold Stark - foreman

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

German

William Arens - post office superintendent

John Arndt - lumber worker

Hans Borg - carpenter

Horace L. Brand - President, Brand Brewing

L.E. Brandt - insurance

Otto Ernst - President, Colonial Laundry

August Eschemann - occupation unknown

Fritz Glogauer - President and Editor, Abendpost

Max Haenel - saloonkeeper

Heinrich Hartung - physician

Emil Hoechster - deputy sheriff

M.J. Huss - lawyer

John Koelling - Koelling & Klappenbach, Booksellers

G. Landau - cigarmaker

C. Linnemayer - solicitor

Conrad Linz - painter

August Lueders - agent

George A.V. Massow - editor, Illinois Staats-Zeitung

Walther R. Michaelis - business manager Freie Presse

Nicholas Michels - lawyer

Christian Muth - ironworks

Fritz Nebel - stone contractor
 John Neumann - agent
 Eugen Niederegger - Niederegger and Thomas liquors
 T.G. Richter - saloonkeeper
 Julius Schmidt - Schmidt Dancing Academy
 C. Siemsen - saloonkeeper
 Emil A. Tauebert - printer
 William Vocke - lawyer
 Louis Wreden - insurance agent

Bohemian

Joseph Babka - occupation unknown
 Michael Brichak - saloonkeeper
 John Filas - saloonkeeper
 Joseph Hladovic - saloonkeeper
 Cyril R. Jandus - lawyer and state senator
 Anton Kocka - presser
 Vincent Kolar - clerk
 Thomas Polivka - janitor
 V. Roubal - coalman

Polish

Nicholas Budzbaum - saloonkeeper
 Cornelius Frey - laborer
 Theodore Helinski - bank cashier
 Franz J. Karch - conductor
 W. Lachkowski - driver
 John F. Smulski - lawyer and banker

Swedish

C. Hjalmar Hedin - clerk
 John D. Lindstrom - toolmaker
 Swan P. Norman - draftsman
 A.P. Olson - machinist

Swiss

J. Bodemann - President, Chicago Embroidery Co.
 Xavier Walther - secretary

Belgian

A. Landa - leather goods

Danish

Max Henius - brewer, chemist

Croatian

Tony Ravich - saloonkeeper

Irish

Edward Noonan - lawyer, ex-congressman

Italian

Vincenzo Lavieri - tailor

APPENDIX IV

DELEGATES TO CHICAGO CHARTER CONVENTION: 1906-1907

<u>Name</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Political Affiliation</u>	<u>Appointed by</u>	<u>Other Public Offices</u>
Joseph Badenoch	grain merchant	Republican	City Council	Alderman, Board of Elec- tion Commissioners
William H. Baker	coal merchant	Republican	Sanitary Trustees	Sanitary Trustee
Walter E. Beebe	lawyer	Republican	Legislature	State Representative
A.W. Beilfuss	printer	Republican	City Council	Alderman
Frank I. Bennett	lawyer real estate	Republican	City Council	Alderman
Z.P. Brosseau	grain commodities	Democrat	Public Library	Library Board
William M. Brown	food merchant	Republican	Legislature	State Senator
Richard E. Burke	lawyer	Democrat	Mayor Dunne	State Representative
Thomas Carey	unknown	Democrat	City Council	Alderman until 1906
Chester W. Church	lawyer	Republican	Legislature	State Representative
B.F. Clettenberg	real estate	Republican	Legislature	State Representative
George E. Cole	President, George Cole & Co., printing	Independent Republican	Governor Deneen	none
Daniel F. Crilly	real estate	Republican	South Park Board	none

<u>Name</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Political Affiliation</u>	<u>Appointed by</u>	<u>Other Public Offices</u>
Daniel L. Cruice *	lawyer	Democrat	Mayor Dunne	none
William E. Dever	lawyer	Democrat	City Council	Alderman
George W. Dixon	lawyer	Republican	Legislature	State Senator
Thomas J. Dixon	general manager Arthur Dixon Co.	Republican	City Council	Alderman
B.A. Eckhart	manufacturer	Republican	Governor Deneen	President, West Park Board; former state senator
John W. Eckhart	President, J.W. Eckhart & Co.	Democrat	Public Library	President, Library Board
Henry F. Eidmann	real estate	Republican	City Council	Alderman; Sanitary District Trustee
F.E. Erickson	salesman	Republican	Legislature	State Representative
Walter L. Fisher	lawyer	Republican	Governor Deneen	none
John J. Fitzpatrick **	plumber, President of CFL	Democrat	Mayor Dunne	none
Milton J. Foreman	lawyer	Republican	City Council	Alderman
F.H. Gansbergen	lawyer	Republican	Lincoln Park Board	Lincoln Park Commissioner

* attended one meeting; replaced by Emil Ritter on December 13

** attended no meetings; replaced by Walter Michaelis on December 28

<u>Name</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Political Affiliation</u>	<u>Appointed by</u>	<u>Other Public Offices</u>
Andrew J. Graham	banker	Democrat	Mayor Dunne	West Park Board Commissioner
_____Greenacre	unknown	unknown	Mayor Dunne	unknown
John Guerin	unknown	unknown	Mayor Dunne	Board of Education
Joseph F. Haas	merchant	Republican	Legislature	County Clerk; former Senator until 1906
Carter Harrison	lawyer	Democrat	Governor Deneen	former Mayor
John W. Hill	lawyer	Republican	Legislature	State Representative
Frank G. Hoyne	real estate	Democrat	Governor Deneen	none
Thomas M. Hunter	broker	Republican	City Council	Alderman
Alexander J. Jones	lawyer	Democrat	Sanitary District	Sanitary District Trustee
James Kittleman	manufacturer	Republican	Legislature	State Representative
Bryan Lathrop	real estate	Republican	Lincoln Park Board	former Lincoln Park Commissioner
James J. Linehan	janitor, CFL	Democrat	Mayor Dunne	none
Carl Lundberg	broker, real estate	Republican	Legislature	State Senator
Thomas MacMillan	clerk, U.S. District Court	Republican	West Park Board	former State Represen- tative
R.R. McCormick	lawyer	Republican	City Council	former Alderman

<u>Name</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Political Affiliation</u>	<u>Appointed by</u>	<u>Other Public Offices</u>
John P. McGoorty	lawyer	Democrat	Mayor Dunne	State Representative
M.L. McKinley	lawyer	Democrat	Legislature	State Representative
Charles E. Merriam	university professor	Republican	Governor Deneen	none
Walter Michaelis	business manager	unknown	Mayor Dunne	none
Joseph A. O'Donnell	lawyer	Democrat	Mayor Dunne	former State Representative
Theodore Oehne	President, Conrad Seipp Brewing	unknown	Mayor Dunne	none
John E. Owens	lawyer	Democrat	Mayor Dunne	former city attorney
Joseph M. Patterson*	newspaper editor (Medill family)	political "leftish gadfly"	Mayor Dunne	former Commissioner of Public Works
G.W. Paullin	fur manufacturer	Republican	Legislature	Sanitary District Trustee
Robert E. Pendarvis	lawyer	Republican	Legislature	State Representative, Chairman of House Committee on Charter Legislation
Louis F. Post	newspaper editor	Democrat ("single-taxer")	Mayor Dunne	Board of Education
John Powers	politician	Democrat	City Council	Alderman; State Senator

* attended one meeting; replaced by Mr. Greenacres on December 28

<u>Name</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Political Affiliation</u>	<u>Appointed by</u>	<u>Other Public Offices</u>
Edward J. Rainey	undertaker	Democrat	Legislature	State Senator
Walter J. Raymer	manufacturer	Republican	City Council	former Alderman
Alexander H. Revell	furniture manufacturer	Republican	Governor Deneen	none
Lewis Rinaker	lawyer	Republican	Legislature	State Representative
Emil Ritter	unknown	unknown	Mayor Dunne	unknown
Raymond Robins	social worker	Democrat	Mayor Dunne	Board of Education
Lessing Rosenthal	lawyer	Republican	Governor Deneen	none
C.O. Sethness	President, Sethness Company	unknown	Board of Education	unknown
David Shanahan	lawyer, real estate	Republican	Legislature	State Representative
John G. Shedd	President, Marshall Field's	Republican	Governor Deneen	none
Frank L. Shepard	lawyer	Republican	Cook County Board	Cook County Board Commissioner
John F. Smulski	banker, lawyer	Republican	West Park Board	former Alderman; for- mer city attorney
Bernard W. Snow	crop expert	Republican	City Council	Alderman
B.E. Sunny	business manager General Electric Co.	Republican	Governor Deneen	none
George B. Swift	President, Swift & Company	Republican	Governor Deneen	former Mayor; former Alderman

<u>Name</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Political Affiliation</u>	<u>Appointed by</u>	<u>Other Public Offices</u>
Graham Taylor	social worker, professor	unknown	Governor Deneen	none
George Thompson	cigarmaker	unknown	Governor Deneen	none
C.J. Vopicka	President, Atlas Brewing	Democrat	Mayor Dunne	former park Commis- sioner
Edwin K. Walker	lawyer	Republican	Cook County Board	Cook County Board Commissioner
Charles Werno	lawyer	Democrat	City Council	Alderman
R.A. White	minister	unknown	Board of Education	Board of Education
D.R. Wilkins	printing company president	unknown	Mayor Dunne	none
John P. Wilson	lawyer	unknown	Governor Deneen	none
Edward C. Young	manufacturer	unknown	Governor Deneen	none
Michael Zimmer	lawyer	Democrat	City Council	Alderman

APPENDIX V

MEMBERS OF THE INDEPENDENCE LEAGUE

Men listed in the Book of Chicagoans^{*}

Henry M. Ashton: lawyer, Democrat
 Miles J. Devine: lawyer, Democrat
 John T. Donahue: lawyer, Democrat
 A.D. Gash: lawyer, Democrat
 James J. Gray: lawyer, Democrat
 A.M. Lawrence: newspaper editor, Democrat
 John E. Owens: lawyer, Democrat
 Howard S. Taylor: lawyer, Democrat (former Populist)
 Joseph F. Triska: lawyer, Democrat

Other members

John T. Bowers
 M.C. Buckley
 William A. Dudley
 Robert Dussman
 J.W. Ernst
 John C. Harding
 W.H. Holly: lawyer
 John Kantor: lawyer
 Sam Koenigsberg
 C.J. McGurn
 Charles H. Mitchell
 P.J. Moloney
 Theodore Nelson
 W.J. Nevin: lawyer
 Thomas J. O'Hare
 Edwin J. Raber

* nine of these twenty-five men were listed in this biography of the "leading men" of the city while fifty-one of the seventy-seven charter convention members were listed

APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Maureen Anne Flanagan has been read and approved by the following committee:

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The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Dec 10, 1980 James L. Penick
Date Director's Signature